CERTIFICATION OF ENROLLMENT

**SECOND SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1550**

Chapter 420, Laws of 2023

68th Legislature

2023 Regular Session

TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 23, 2023

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| Passed by the House April 23, 2023  Yeas 60 Nays 37  LAURIE JINKINS  **Speaker of the House of Representatives**  Passed by the Senate April 23, 2023  Yeas 30 Nays 19  DENNY HECK  **President of the Senate** | CERTIFICATE  I, Bernard Dean, Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives of the State of Washington, do hereby certify that the attached is **SECOND SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1550** as passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate on the dates hereon set forth.  BERNARD DEAN  Chief Clerk |
| Approved May 11, 2023 9:47 AM | May 11, 2023 |
| JAY INSLEE  **Governor of the State of Washington** | **Secretary of State**  **State of Washington** |

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**SECOND SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1550**

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AS AMENDED BY THE SENATE

Passed Legislature - 2023 Regular Session

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

**By** House Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Santos, Senn, Ortiz-Self, Berry, Goodman, Ramel, Simmons, Stonier, Bergquist, Pollet, Fosse, and Doglio)

AN ACT Relating to assisting eligible children in need of additional preparation to be successful in kindergarten by replacing transitional kindergarten with a legislatively established and authorized transition to kindergarten program; amending RCW 28A.225.160 and 43.88C.010; adding a new section to chapter 28A.300 RCW; creating a new section; and providing an expiration date.

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

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

(1) The intent of the legislature is to continue and rename transitional kindergarten as the transition to kindergarten program and that the program be established in statute with the goal of assisting eligible children in need of additional preparation to be successful kindergarten students in the following school year. The transition to kindergarten program is not part of the state's statutory program of basic education under RCW 28A.150.200.

(2)(a) The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall administer the transition to kindergarten program and shall adopt rules under chapter 34.05 RCW for the administration of, the allocation of state funding for, and minimum standards and requirements for the transition to kindergarten program. Initial rules, which include expectations for school districts, charter schools as allowed by subsection (7) of this section, and state-tribal education compact schools transitioning existing programs to the new requirements established in this section must be adopted in time for the 2023-24 school year, and permanent rules must be adopted by the beginning of the 2024-25 school year.

(b) School districts, charter schools as allowed by subsection (7) of this section, and state-tribal education compact schools operating a transition to kindergarten program shall adopt policies regarding eligibility, recruitment, and enrollment for this program that, at a minimum, meet the requirements of subsection (3) of this section.

(3) The rules adopted under subsection (2) of this section must include, at a minimum, the following requirements for school districts, charter schools as allowed by subsection (7) of this section, and state-tribal education compact schools operating a transition to kindergarten program:

(a)(i) A limitation on program enrollment to eligible children. Eligible children include only those who:

(A) Have been determined to benefit from additional preparation for kindergarten; and

(B) Are at least four years old by August 31st of the school year they enroll in the transition to kindergarten program.

(ii) A requirement, as practicable, for school districts, charter schools as allowed by subsection (7) of this section, and state-tribal education compact schools to prioritize families with the lowest incomes and children most in need for additional preparation to be successful in kindergarten when enrolling eligible children in a transition to kindergarten program;

(iii) Access to the transition to kindergarten program does not constitute an individual entitlement for any particular child.

(b) Except for children who have been excused from participation by their parents or legal guardians, a requirement that the Washington kindergarten inventory of developing skills as established by RCW 28A.655.080 be administered to all eligible children enrolled in a transition to kindergarten program at the beginning of the child's enrollment in the program and at least one more time during the school year.

(c) A requirement that all eligible children enrolled in a transition to kindergarten program be assigned a statewide student identifier and that the transition to kindergarten program be considered a separate class or course for the purposes of data reporting requirements in RCW 28A.320.175.

(d) A requirement that a local child care and early learning needs assessment is conducted before beginning or expanding a transition to kindergarten program that considers the existing availability and affordability of early learning providers, such as the early childhood education and assistance programs, head start programs, and licensed child care centers and family home providers in the region. Data available through the regionalized data dashboard maintained by the department of children, youth, and families or any other appropriate sources may be used to inform the needs assessment required by this subsection.

(e)(i) A requirement that school districts, charter schools as allowed by subsection (7) of this section, and state-tribal education compact schools adhere to guidelines, as developed by the office of the superintendent of public instruction, related to:

(A) Best practices for site readiness of facilities that are used for the program;

(B) Developmentally appropriate curricula designed to assist in maintaining high quality programs; and

(C) Professional development opportunities.

(ii) The office of the superintendent of public instruction must develop a process for conducting site visits of any school district, charter school as allowed by subsection (7) of this section, or state-tribal education compact school operating a transition to kindergarten program and provide feedback on elements listed in this subsection (3)(e).

(f) A prohibition on charging tuition or other fees to state-funded eligible children for enrollment in a transition to kindergarten program.

(g) A prohibition on establishing a policy of excluding an eligible child due only to the presence of a disability.

(4)(a) The office of the superintendent of public instruction, in collaboration with the department of children, youth, and families, shall develop statewide coordinated eligibility, recruitment, enrollment, and selection best practices and provide technical assistance to those implementing a transition to kindergarten program to support connections with local early learning providers.

(b) School districts, charter schools as allowed by subsection (7) of this section, and state-tribal education compact schools must consider the best practices developed under this subsection (4) when adopting the policies required under subsection (2)(b) of this section.

(5) Nothing in this section prohibits school districts, charter schools as allowed by subsection (7) of this section, and state-tribal education compact schools from blending or colocating a transition to kindergarten program with other early learning programs.

(6)(a) Funding for the transition to kindergarten program must be based on the following:

(i) The distribution formula established under RCW 28A.150.260 (4)(a), (5), (6), (8), and (10)(a) and (b), calculated using the actual number of annual average full-time equivalent eligible children enrolled in the program. A transition to kindergarten child must be counted as a kindergarten student for purposes of the funding calculations referenced in this subsection, but must be reported separately.

(ii) The distribution formula developed in RCW 28A.160.150 through 28A.160.192, calculated using reported ridership for eligible children enrolled in the program.

(b) Funding provided for the transition to kindergarten program is not part of the state's statutory program of basic education under RCW 28A.150.200 and must be expended only for the support of operating a transition to kindergarten program.

(7) Charter schools authorized under RCW 28A.710.080(2) are immediately permitted to operate a transition to kindergarten program under this section. Beginning with the 2025-26 school year, any charter school authorized under RCW 28A.710.080 (1) or (2) is permitted to operate a transition to kindergarten program under this section.

**Sec.**  RCW 28A.225.160 and 2009 c 380 s 3 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) Except as provided in subsection ((~~(2)~~)) (3) of this section and otherwise provided by law, it is the general policy of the state that the common schools shall be open to the admission of all persons who are five years of age and less than ((~~twenty-one~~)) 21 years residing in that school district. Except as otherwise provided by law or rules adopted by the superintendent of public instruction, districts may establish uniform entry qualifications, including but not limited to birthdate requirements, for admission to kindergarten and first grade programs of the common schools. Such rules may provide for individualized exceptions based upon the ability, or the need, or both, of an individual student. Nothing in this section authorizes school districts, public schools, or the superintendent of public instruction to create state-funded programs based on entry qualification exceptions except as otherwise expressly provided by law.

(2) For the purpose of complying with any rule adopted by the superintendent of public instruction that authorizes a preadmission screening process as a prerequisite to granting individualized exceptions to the uniform entry qualifications, a school district may collect fees to cover expenses incurred in the administration of any preadmission screening process: PROVIDED, That in so establishing such fee or fees, the district shall adopt rules for waiving and reducing such fees in the cases of those persons whose families, by reason of their low income, would have difficulty in paying the entire amount of such fees.

((~~(2)~~)) (3) A student who meets the definition of a child of a military family in transition under Article II of RCW 28A.705.010 shall be permitted to continue enrollment at the grade level in the common schools commensurate with the grade level of the student when attending school in the sending state as defined in Article II of RCW 28A.705.010, regardless of age or birthdate requirements.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The department of children, youth, and families must make administrative changes to better align early childhood education and assistance program implementation with state-funded early learning programs serving three through five-year old children offered by school districts, charter schools authorized under RCW 28A.710.080(2), and state-tribal education compact schools. The department must submit a report, in compliance with RCW 43.01.036, of the administrative changes to the appropriate committees of the legislature by July 1, 2024.

(2) This section expires August 30, 2025.

**Sec.**  RCW 43.88C.010 and 2022 c 219 s 2 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The caseload forecast council is hereby created. The council shall consist of two individuals appointed by the governor and four individuals, one of whom is appointed by the chairperson of each of the two largest political caucuses in the senate and house of representatives. The chair of the council shall be selected from among the four caucus appointees. The council may select such other officers as the members deem necessary.

(2) The council shall employ a caseload forecast supervisor to supervise the preparation of all caseload forecasts. As used in this chapter, "supervisor" means the caseload forecast supervisor.

(3) Approval by an affirmative vote of at least five members of the council is required for any decisions regarding employment of the supervisor. Employment of the supervisor shall terminate after each term of three years. At the end of the first year of each three-year term the council shall consider extension of the supervisor's term by one year. The council may fix the compensation of the supervisor. The supervisor shall employ staff sufficient to accomplish the purposes of this section.

(4) The caseload forecast council shall oversee the preparation of and approve, by an affirmative vote of at least four members, the official state caseload forecasts prepared under RCW 43.88C.020. If the council is unable to approve a forecast before a date required in RCW 43.88C.020, the supervisor shall submit the forecast without approval and the forecast shall have the same effect as if approved by the council.

(5) A councilmember who does not cast an affirmative vote for approval of the official caseload forecast may request, and the supervisor shall provide, an alternative forecast based on assumptions specified by the member.

(6) Members of the caseload forecast council shall serve without additional compensation but shall be reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with RCW 44.04.120 while attending sessions of the council or on official business authorized by the council. Nonlegislative members of the council shall be reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060.

(7) "Caseload," as used in this chapter, means:

(a) The number of persons expected to meet entitlement requirements and require the services of public assistance programs, state correctional institutions, state correctional noninstitutional supervision, state institutions for juvenile offenders, the common school system, long-term care, medical assistance, foster care, and adoption support;

(b) The number of students who are eligible for the Washington college bound scholarship program and are expected to attend an institution of higher education as defined in RCW 28B.92.030;

(c) The number of students who are eligible for the Washington college grant program under RCW 28B.92.200 and 28B.92.205 and are expected to attend an institution of higher education as defined in RCW 28B.92.030; and

(d) The number of children who are eligible, as defined in RCW 43.216.505, to participate in, and the number of children actually served by, the early childhood education and assistance program.

(8) The caseload forecast council shall forecast the temporary assistance for needy families and the working connections child care programs as a courtesy.

(9) By January 1, 2023, the caseload forecast council shall present the number of individuals who are assessed as eligible for and have requested a service through the individual and family services waiver and the basic plus waiver administered by the developmental disabilities administration as a courtesy. The caseload forecast council shall be presented with the service request list as defined in RCW 71A.10.020 to aid in development of this information.

(10) Beginning with the official forecast submitted in November 2022 and subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the caseload forecast council shall forecast the number of individuals who are assessed as eligible for and have requested supported living services, a service through the core waiver, an individual and family services waiver, and the basic plus waiver administered by the developmental disabilities administration as a courtesy. The caseload forecast council shall be presented with the service request list as defined in RCW 71A.10.020 to aid in development of this information.

(11) As a courtesy, beginning with the official forecast submitted in November 2022, the caseload forecast council shall forecast the number of individuals who are expected to reside in state-operated living alternatives administered by the developmental disabilities administration.

(12) The caseload forecast council shall forecast youth participating in the extended foster care program pursuant to RCW 74.13.031 separately from other children who are residing in foster care and who are under eighteen years of age.

(13) The caseload forecast council shall forecast the number of youth expected to receive behavioral rehabilitation services while involved in the foster care system and the number of screened in reports of child abuse or neglect.

(14) The caseload forecast council shall forecast eligible children participating in the transition to kindergarten program under section 1 of this act.

(15) Unless the context clearly requires otherwise, the definitions provided in RCW 43.88.020 apply to this chapter.

((~~(15)~~)) (16) During the 2021-2023 fiscal biennium, and beginning with the November 2021 forecast, the caseload forecast council shall produce an unofficial forecast of the long-term caseload for juvenile rehabilitation as a courtesy.

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Passed by the House April 23, 2023.

Passed by the Senate April 23, 2023.

Approved by the Governor May 11, 2023.

Filed in Office of Secretary of State May 11, 2023.