

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 1679

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Human Services, Youth, & Early Learning

**Title:** An act relating to modifying and extending requirements of a work group convened to address the needs of students in foster care, experiencing homelessness, or both, by adding reporting and other requirements related to students in or exiting institutional education facilities.

**Brief Description:** Modifying and extending requirements of a work group convened to address the needs of students in foster care, experiencing homelessness, or both.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Rule, Eslick, Reeves, Gregerson and Pollet.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Human Services, Youth, & Early Learning: 2/14/23, 2/15/23 [DP].

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Expands the work group to address the needs of students in foster care or experiencing homelessness (work group) to address students in or exiting juvenile rehabilitation facilities.
- Extends the expiration date of the work group from December 31, 2024, until December 31, 2028.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES, YOUTH, & EARLY LEARNING

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Senn, Chair; Cortes, Vice Chair; Taylor, Vice Chair; Eslick, Ranking Minority Member; Couture, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Callan, Dent, Goodman, Ortiz-Self and Rule.

**Minority Report:** Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Walsh.

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*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.*

**Staff:** Luke Wickham (786-7146).

**Background:**

*Work Group to Address the Needs of Students in Foster Care or Experiencing Homelessness.*

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, in collaboration with the Department of Children, Youth, and Families; the Office of Homeless Youth Prevention and Protection Programs of the Department of Commerce; and the Student Achievement Council, must convene a work group to address the needs of students in foster care, students experiencing homelessness, or both (work group). This work group must include representatives of nongovernmental agencies and representation from the Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee (EOGOAC). The work group must also include four legislative members who possess experience in issues of:

- education;
- the foster care system; and
- homeless youth from each of the two largest caucuses of the Senate and each of the two largest caucuses of the House of Representatives.

The work group must develop recommendations to promote the:

- achievement of parity in education outcomes with the general student population; and
- elimination of racial and ethnic disparities for education outcomes in comparison to the general student population.

In developing these recommendations, the work group must:

- review the education outcomes of students in foster care, experiencing homelessness, or both, by examining data, disaggregated by race and ethnicity, on:
  - kindergarten readiness, early grade reading and math, eighth and ninth grade students on track to graduate, high school completion, postsecondary enrollment, and postsecondary completion; and
  - school attendance, school mobility, special education status, and school discipline;
- evaluate the outcomes, needs, and service array for students in foster care, experiencing homelessness, or both, and the specific needs of students of color and students with special education needs;
- engage stakeholders, including students in foster care, experiencing homelessness, or both, foster parents and relative caregivers, birth parents, caseworkers, school districts and educators, early learning providers, postsecondary institutions, and federally recognized tribes, to provide input on the development of recommendations; and
- submit annual reports to the Governor, the appropriate committees of the Legislature, and the EOGOAC that identify:
  - progress the state has made toward achieving education parity for students in foster care, experiencing homelessness, or both; and
  - recommendations that can be implemented using existing resources, rules, and

regulations, and those that would require policy, administrative, and resource allocation changes prior to implementation.

The work group must submit a final report to the Governor, the appropriate committees of the Legislature, and the EOGOAC by July 1, 2024. The work group expires December 31, 2024.

*McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.*

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (McKinney-Vento Act) is a federal law that provides money for homeless shelter programs.

The term "homeless children and youths" is defined in the McKinney-Vento Act to mean individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; and includes:

- children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals;
- children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- migratory children who qualify as homeless because the children are living in circumstances described the bullets listed above.

*Education Data Center.*

The Education Data Center (commonly known as the Education Research and Data Center or ERDC) in the Office of Financial Management, conducts collaborative analyses of early learning, kindergarten through grade 12, and higher education programs and education issues across the preschool through higher education system. Among other duties, the ERDC is required to prepare a regular report on the educational and workforce outcomes of youth in the juvenile justice system.

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**Summary of Bill:**

The work group to address the needs of students in foster care or experiencing homelessness (work group) is expanded to address students in or exiting juvenile rehabilitation facilities. This expansion is reflected in changes to the work group's reporting requirements and the development of recommendations.

The work group must include representation from the Education Research and Data Center and meaningful consultation with youth and young adults who have lived experience in foster care, homelessness, and juvenile rehabilitation.

The work group is extended beyond its current expiration date of December 31, 2024, until December 31, 2028. The deadline for submitting the final report from the work group is delayed until July 1, 2028 (from July 1, 2024).

The term "students in foster care" is defined to mean students who are the subject of a dependency proceeding.

The term "students experiencing homelessness" is defined to mean students without a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence in accordance with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

The term "students in or exiting juvenile rehabilitation facilities" is defined to mean a person under age 21 who is a resident or a former resident of an institutional education facility, which means:

- residential habilitation and child study and treatment centers;
- state long-term juvenile institutions operated by the Department of Children, Youth, and Families;
- county juvenile detention facilities; and
- facilities of the Department of Corrections that incarcerate juveniles committed as adults.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) Children can move between placements and struggle in school. There are policies and procedures within the education system that do not work well with the child welfare system. This work group to address the needs of students in foster care or experiencing homelessness (work group) brings a wide group of voices to the table and provides recommendations to the Legislature.

For five years, this work group has been working diligently to identify recommendations to support students in foster care and experiencing homelessness. These two populations experience similar educational challenges, grounded in trauma and frequent transitions in homes and schools. These marginalized student populations are impacted by multiple systems, and those systems need to be talking to each other.

Since its inception, the work group has determined shared outcome measures, passed laws, and increased state investment and needed educational supports.

This bill would add students in or exiting juvenile rehabilitation facilities to the population for which the work group is responsible.

Students exiting juvenile justice institutions are some of the most vulnerable, only 14 percent of whom graduate. Washington is the only state attempting to identify recommendations for all of these populations. This bill will ensure we have the data and reporting necessary to support these students.

This work group prioritizes this important cross-system work.

The work group is aligned with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction graduation goals for all students. This includes the needs of a long overlooked student group—students exiting juvenile justice institutions.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying:** Representative Alicia Rule, prime sponsor; Dawn Rains, Treehouse; Megan Veith, Building Changes; Annie Blackledge, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction; and Juliet Schindler, College Success Foundation.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.