SENATE BILL REPORT
SB 5942

As of January 13, 2026

Title: An act relating to the department of children, youth, and families accountability board.

Brief Description: Concerning the department of children, youth, and families accountability board.

Sponsors: Senator Wilson, C..

Brief History:
Committee Activity: Human Services: 1/14/26.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Renames the Department of Children, Youth, and Families Oversight Board to the Department of Children, Youth, and Families Accountability Board (Board).
- Revises the purpose and duties of the Board.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Staff: Alison Mendiola (786-7488)

Background: The Oversight Board for the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYFOB) was created in 2017, along with the creation of the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF), and consists of 21 members. The purpose of DCYFOB is to monitor and ensure DCYF achieves the stated outcomes of chapter 6, Laws of 2017 3rd sp. sess., and complies with administrative acts, relevant statutes, rules, and policies pertaining to early learning, juvenile rehabilitation, juvenile justice, and children and family services.

DCYFOB has the following powers, which may be exercised by majority vote of the board:

- to receive reports of the Office of the Family and Children's Ombuds (OFCO);

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- to obtain access to all relevant records in the possession of OFCO, except as prohibited by law;
- to select its officers and adopt of rules for orderly procedure;
- to request investigations by OFCO of administrative acts;
- to request and receive information, outcome data, documents, materials, and records from DCYF relating to children and family welfare, juvenile rehabilitation, juvenile justice, and early learning;
- to determine whether DCYF is achieving its performance measures;
- if final review is requested by a licensee, to review whether DCYF licensors appropriately and consistently applied agency rules in inspection reports that do not involve a violation of health and safety standards as defined in statute in cases that have already been reviewed by the internal review process with the authority to overturn, change, or uphold such decisions; and
- to conduct annual reviews of a sample of DCYF contracts for services from a variety of program and service areas to ensure those contracts are performance-based, and to assess the measures included in each contract.

Additionally, DCYFOB:

- has general oversight over the performance and policies of DCYF, and is to provide advice and input to DCYF and the Governor;
- is to review existing surveys of providers, customers, parent groups, and external services to assess whether DCYF is effectively delivering services, and is to conduct additional surveys as needed to assess whether DCYF is effectively delivering services;
- is subject to the Open Public Meetings Act, except to the extent disclosure of records or information is otherwise confidential under state or federal law;
- members receive no compensation for their service on the board, but are to be reimbursed for travel expenses;
- members with direct lived experience may receive compensation and be reimbursed for travel expenses as provided for under relevant state statutes;
- is to select, by majority vote, an executive director who is the chief administrative officer of DCYFOB; and
- is to maintain a staff not to exceed one full-time equivalent employee.

Other provisions:

- records or information received by DCYFOB is confidential to the extent permitted by state or federal laws; and
- appointed legislators are to be reimbursed for travel expenses according to relevant state statutes.

DCYFOB issues an annual report to the Governor and Legislature by December 1st each year. The report must review DCYF's progress towards meeting stated performance measures and desired performance outcome, and must also include a review of DCYF's strategic plan, policies, and rules.

Summary of Bill: DCYFOB is renamed the Department of Children, Youth, and Families Accountability Board (Board) and resides in the Office of Financial Management for administrative purposes only. The Board is created to provide independent accountability over DCYF's operations, policies, and outcomes.

The purpose of the Board is to:

- monitor DCYF's progress towards achieving its stated goals and performance outcomes;
- ensure accountability in DCYF's decision-making and policy implementation; and
- promote transparency and public trust in DCYF's work on behalf of children, youth, and families.

The following powers are eliminated:

- if final review is requested by a licensee, to review whether DCYF licensors appropriately and consistently applied agency rules in inspection reports that do not involve a violation of health and safety standards as defined in statute in cases that have already been reviewed by the internal review process with the authority to overturn, change, or uphold such decisions; and
- to conduct annual reviews of a sample of DCYF contracts for services from a variety of program and service areas to ensure that those contracts are performance-based, and to assess the measures included in each contract.

Starting in 2027, the Board is to submit a biennial report to the Governor and the Legislature by July 1st of each off-numbered year. The report will assess DCYF's progress toward meeting priority performance measures selected biennially by the Board to maintain flexibility and data relevancy.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 2, 2026.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.