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HOUSE BILL 1543

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State of Washington

52nd Legislature

1991 Regular Session

By Representatives Fraser, Belcher, Winsley, Leonard, Beck, Hine, Ebersole, Brekke, Jones, Pruitt, Holland, Jacobsen and Heavey.

Read first time January 31, 1991. Referred to Committees on Human Services\Appropriations.

1 AN ACT Relating to establishment of a family support worker program  
2 in schools; adding a new chapter to Title 74 RCW; creating a new  
3 section; and making an appropriation.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that children  
6 and their families frequently are not linked with support services  
7 available in the community until a problem reaches a crisis level.  
8 Many educators, in an attempt to provide support to children at risk,  
9 are devoting valuable instruction time to assisting with their social  
10 service needs.

11 (2) The legislature further finds that public schools can serve as  
12 an effective site for the identification and assessment of at-risk  
13 factors and for referrals of students to appropriate community support  
14 services before the child's situation reaches a crisis level.

1 (3) The legislature further finds that schools should foster  
2 increased involvement between the family, the community, and the school  
3 by promoting activities that encourage parents and community members to  
4 participate in school activities.

5 (4) The legislature further finds that several existing school-  
6 based family support worker projects have successfully provided  
7 students and families with access to community social services, thereby  
8 reducing the need to spend instructional time providing social services  
9 to students, increasing parental involvement in their child's  
10 education, and improving the educational achievement of at-risk  
11 students.

12 (5) The purpose of this chapter is to help at-risk children and  
13 their families gain access to social services, improve the academic  
14 achievement of children at risk, increase parental and community  
15 involvement in schools, and to reduce the amount of instruction time  
16 devoted to the social service needs of children through the  
17 establishment of family support worker projects in selected public  
18 schools throughout the state.

19 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** The terms defined in this section shall  
20 have the meanings indicated when used in this chapter.

21 (1) "Department" means the department of social and health  
22 services.

23 (2) "Secretary" means the secretary of the department of social  
24 and health services.

25 (3) "Low-income student" means a student who meets the family-  
26 income criteria for a free or reduced-price lunch according to the  
27 provisions of 20 U.S.C. Sec. 1751, the national school lunch act, as  
28 amended.

1 (4) "Designated school" means the school identified in the grant  
2 award as the recipient of a family support worker project.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) There is established in the  
4 department a family support worker program that shall fund and  
5 coordinate school-based family support worker projects. The projects  
6 shall assist with the educational and social service needs of at-risk  
7 students and their families.

8 (2) Applications for project funding under this section shall:

9 (a) Identify and describe the designated school and include  
10 documentation of the number of low-income students attending the  
11 designated school.

12 (b) Demonstrate the active participation of public and private  
13 entities in the development of the family support project including,  
14 but not limited to:

15 (i) The administrator of and instructors at, the designated school;

16 (ii) Youth services organizations;

17 (iii) Health care providers;

18 (iv) Law enforcement representatives;

19 (v) Employment services providers; and

20 (vi) Community members.

21 (c) Describe the job responsibilities of the student and family  
22 support worker, including but not limited to assessment of at-risk  
23 children, referrals to community social service providers, home  
24 visitation, casework management, parental involvement activities,  
25 community involvement activities, and academic achievement enhancement  
26 activities.

27 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** (1) The secretary shall award grants for  
28 family support worker projects. The secretary shall award the grants

1 on a competitive basis based upon information provided in applications  
2 for funding. To the greatest extent possible, grants shall be  
3 geographically distributed throughout the state.

4 (2) Grants awarded under this section to the greatest extent  
5 possible shall be equally distributed among elementary schools, middle  
6 schools, and secondary schools. A minimum of eighty percent of the  
7 grants shall be awarded to schools with a low-income student enrollment  
8 of at least thirty percent.

9 (3) Family support worker projects funded under this chapter shall  
10 include, at a minimum, one full-time equivalent family support worker  
11 per designated school. Schools with an enrollment of less than two  
12 hundred students may share a family support worker with another school  
13 with an enrollment of less than two hundred students.

14 (4) The secretary shall give preference to those applications that  
15 will provide family support workers through contracts with private or  
16 public social services entities in the community.

17 (5) Twenty-five percent of the funding for projects under this  
18 chapter shall be community matching funds provided by private or public  
19 entities, including the selected school districts. Contributions of  
20 materials, equipment, or supplies may be considered as all or part of  
21 the funding provided by the community.

22 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** (1) The department shall, to the extent  
23 practical, assist with the development of additional family support  
24 projects by rotating or loaning department employees to schools to  
25 serve as family support workers.

26 (2) The department shall report to the legislature by December 1,  
27 1992, on the progress of efforts to provide family support workers for  
28 additional schools, as required by this section.

1        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 6.**        The department shall evaluate the  
2 effectiveness of the family support worker projects. The department  
3 shall develop standards for measuring the effectiveness of family  
4 support worker projects that reflect factors such as academic progress,  
5 treatment outcomes, and the enhancement of parental and community  
6 involvement.

7        The department shall report the results of the evaluation to the  
8 legislature by December 31 of each odd-numbered year.

9        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 7.**        Sections 1 through 5 of this act shall  
10 constitute a new chapter in Title 74 RCW.

11       NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 8.**        The sum of five million dollars, or as  
12 much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated from the general fund  
13 to the department of social and health services, for the biennium  
14 ending June 30, 1993, to carry out the purposes of this act.

15       NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 9.**        If any provision of this act or its  
16 application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the  
17 remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other  
18 persons or circumstances is not affected.