

FINAL BILL REPORT

SB 6709

C 326 L 02
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Addressing service and education planning for children in out-of-home care.

Sponsors: Senators Eide, Costa, Rasmussen, Thibaudeau, Prentice, Fraser, Kohl-Welles, McAuliffe, Haugen and Keiser.

Senate Committee on Human Services & Corrections
House Committee on Children & Family Services

Background: A large proportion of children placed in foster care are taken out of the school they have regularly attended to accommodate the change in residence to the foster care placement. This disruption to a child's education may have a significant impact upon academic success.

Summary: The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) must, within existing resources, convene a workgroup and prepare a plan on educational stability for children in short-term foster care. The membership of the workgroup is: Children's Administration of DSHS, special education, transportation and apportionment divisions of OSPI, Washington State Institute for Public Policy, school districts, foster care advocates and others. The duties of the workgroup are to:

- determine the current status of school placement for children placed in short-term foster care;
- identify options and possible funding sources from existing resources which could be made available to assure that children placed in short-term foster care are able to remain in the school where they were enrolled prior to placement;
- submit recommendations to the Legislature by November 1, 2002, to assure the best interest of the child receives primary consideration in school placement decisions.

The Nooksack Valley and Mount Vernon school districts must implement a pilot project within existing resources to assist children in foster care fewer than 75 days to continue attending the school in which they were enrolled prior to entering foster care. The school districts must provide data to the working group studying this issue. The date for the pilot project to be implemented is April 30, 2002. DSHS must negotiate a plan with the schools for transporting the child but is not responsible for the cost of transportation.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	47	0	
House	96	0	(House amended)
Senate	42	0	(Senate concurred)

Effective: April 2, 2002