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HOUSE BILL 1058

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State of Washington

58th Legislature

2003 Regular Session

By Representatives Kagi, Boldt, McIntire, Nixon, Dickerson, Fromhold, O'Brien, Lantz, Linville, Kenney, Kessler, Clibborn, Talcott, Simpson and Wood

Read first time 01/14/2003. Referred to Committee on Children & Family Services.

1 AN ACT Relating to educational attainment of children in foster  
2 care; adding new sections to chapter 74.15 RCW; and creating a new  
3 section.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that the educational  
6 attainment of children in foster care is significantly lower than that  
7 of children not in foster care. The legislature finds that many  
8 factors influence educational outcomes for children in foster care,  
9 including the disruption of the educational process because of  
10 repeatedly changing schools.

11 The legislature recognizes and encourages the ongoing efforts of  
12 the department of social and health services and the office of the  
13 superintendent of public instruction to improve educational attainment  
14 of children in foster care. It is the intent of the legislature that  
15 efforts continue such as recruiting foster homes in school districts  
16 with high rates of foster care placements, the development and  
17 dissemination of informational materials regarding the challenges faced  
18 by children in foster care, and the expansion to other school districts  
19 of best practices identified in pilot projects.

1 It is also the intent of the legislature that the best interests of  
2 the child are a primary consideration in the school placement of a  
3 child in foster care. Whenever practical, foster children are to  
4 remain enrolled in the same school upon entry into foster care.

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 74.15 RCW  
6 to read as follows:

7 The administrative regions of the department shall develop  
8 protocols with the respective school districts in their regions  
9 specifying strategies for communication, coordination, and  
10 collaboration in order to maximize the educational continuity and  
11 achievement for foster children.

12 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 74.15 RCW  
13 to read as follows:

14 (1) The department shall establish an oversight committee composed  
15 of staff from the children's administration of the department, the  
16 office of the superintendent of public instruction, and advocacy  
17 agencies to develop best practice standards to maintain foster children  
18 in their home school whenever practical.

19 (2) The duties of the workgroup shall include, but are not limited  
20 to:

21 (a) Developing strategies for school-based recruitment of foster  
22 homes;

23 (b) Monitoring the progress of current pilot projects;

24 (c) Overseeing the expansion of the number of pilot projects;

25 (d) Promoting the use of best practices throughout the pilot  
26 projects; and

27 (e) Informing the legislature of the status of efforts to improve  
28 educational attainment of foster children.

29 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 74.15 RCW  
30 to read as follows:

31 The department shall work with the administrative office of the  
32 courts to develop protocols to ensure that educational stability is  
33 addressed during the shelter care hearing.

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