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HOUSE BILL 2156

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State of Washington                      58th Legislature                      2003 Regular Session

By Representatives Santos, Pettigrew and Upthegrove

Read first time 02/27/2003. Referred to Committee on Education.

1            AN ACT Relating to recognizing the value of parent and family  
2 involvement in the academic success of children by removing barriers to  
3 admission into alternative publicly funded classrooms; amending RCW  
4 28A.320.140; adding new sections to chapter 28A.320 RCW; and creating  
5 a new section.

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

7            NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 1.** The legislature recognizes that Article IX  
8 of the Washington state Constitution provides that, "It is the  
9 paramount duty of the state to make ample provision for the education  
10 of all children residing within its borders, without distinction or  
11 preference on account of race, color, caste, or sex" and that "The  
12 legislature shall provide for a general and uniform system of public  
13 schools." The legislature finds that children have different learning  
14 styles and needs and that parent and family involvement in educational  
15 activities is critical to the academic achievement of children and  
16 crucial to the success of all K-12 educational programs. Families have  
17 the right and responsibility to be active partners and participants in  
18 the education of their children based on the needs of each child.  
19 Although the value of parent and family involvement in educational

1 activities is without question, certain barriers to parent and family  
2 participation in school activities exist, including, but not limited  
3 to, work schedules, illness, disabilities, poverty, limited English  
4 proficiency, lack of transportation, cultural differences, lack of  
5 child care, and incarceration. Written contracts and verbal  
6 expectations mandating parent and family participation in school  
7 activities create unfair barriers to program admission for many  
8 students who would otherwise benefit from a diversity of educational  
9 opportunities. Most of these barriers are economic in nature,  
10 preventing many parents and families with lower incomes from  
11 participating in certain alternative educational programs.

12 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.320  
13 RCW to read as follows:

14 Traditional and alternative educational opportunities shall be made  
15 available to students on a general, uniform, and equal basis. Schools  
16 shall not create barriers to admission for students who would otherwise  
17 benefit from traditional or alternative educational opportunities. The  
18 admission criteria for any traditional or alternative common school  
19 program shall not include any written or verbal requirement or  
20 expectation that parents or family members must volunteer or  
21 participate in school activities for a child to attend the program.  
22 Parent and family involvement in school programs and activities shall  
23 be valued and encouraged but not required for school or program  
24 admission. A child shall not be denied admission into any traditional  
25 or alternative classroom because of disabilities caused by a family's  
26 economic or social status, including the inability or unwillingness of  
27 a parent or family member to volunteer, provide transportation, or  
28 participate in school activities. Traditional and alternative common  
29 school programs shall be free of tuition whether required in the form  
30 of dollars or hours of labor.

31 **Sec. 3.** RCW 28A.320.140 and 1997 c 266 s 14 are each amended to  
32 read as follows:

33 (1) School district boards of directors may establish schools or  
34 programs which parents may choose for their children to attend in  
35 which: (a) Students are required to conform to dress and grooming  
36 codes, including requiring that students wear uniforms; (b) parents are

1 ((~~required~~)) regularly encouraged to participate in the student's  
2 education; or (c) discipline requirements are more stringent than in  
3 other schools in the district.

4 (2) School district boards of directors may establish schools or  
5 programs in which: (a) Students are required to conform to dress and  
6 grooming codes, including requiring that students wear uniforms; (b)  
7 parents are regularly (~~counseled and~~) encouraged to participate in  
8 the student's education; or (c) discipline requirements are more  
9 stringent than in other schools in the district. School boards may  
10 require that students who are subject to suspension or expulsion attend  
11 these schools or programs as a condition of continued enrollment in the  
12 school district.

13 (3) If students are required to wear uniforms in these programs or  
14 schools, school districts shall accommodate students so that the  
15 uniform requirement is not an unfair barrier to school attendance and  
16 participation.

17 (4) Nothing in this section impairs or reduces in any manner  
18 whatsoever the authority of a board under other law to impose a dress  
19 and appearance code. However, if a board requires uniforms under such  
20 other authority, it shall accommodate students so that the uniform  
21 requirement is not an unfair barrier to school attendance and  
22 participation.

23 (5) School district boards of directors may adopt dress and  
24 grooming code policies which prohibit students from wearing gang-  
25 related apparel. If a dress and grooming code policy contains this  
26 provision, the school board must also establish policies to notify  
27 students and parents of what clothing and apparel is considered to be  
28 gang-related apparel. This notice must precede any disciplinary action  
29 resulting from a student wearing gang-related apparel.

30 (6) School district boards of directors may not adopt a dress and  
31 grooming code policy which precludes students who participate in  
32 nationally recognized youth organizations from wearing organization  
33 uniforms on days that the organization has a scheduled activity or  
34 prohibit students from wearing clothing in observance of their  
35 religion.

36 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.320  
37 RCW to read as follows:

1           Acceptance to a traditional or alternative school program shall not  
2 be determined by parents or family members of participants in  
3 traditional or alternative school programs.

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