

2SHB 3168 - S COMM AMD
By Committee on Ways & Means

ADOPTED AND ENGROSSED 03/07/08

1 Strike everything after the enacting clause and insert the
2 following:

3 "NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that:

4 (1) It is in the best interest of the state to provide early
5 learning services to economically disadvantaged families;

6 (2) Research has demonstrated that comprehensive services,
7 including family support services designed to meet the early education
8 needs of low-income and at-risk children, are successful in improving
9 school readiness, reducing the risk of juvenile delinquency and
10 incarceration, and reducing reliance on public assistance among these
11 children later in life;

12 (3) The state's early childhood education and assistance program
13 was originally established to serve as the state counterpart to the
14 federal head start program. When it was created, it aligned with the
15 federal program in both standards and funding levels;

16 (4) The state early childhood education and assistance program has
17 served an important role in providing comprehensive services to low-
18 income children. However, since it was first created, per-child
19 funding levels for the state program have not kept pace with funding
20 levels for the federal program. This has resulted in fewer service
21 hours for children and less intensive services for families;

22 (5) Aligning performance standards and funding levels for the state
23 early childhood education and assistance program with federal head
24 start will improve the quality of state-supported early learning
25 programs. Additionally, it will improve school readiness through
26 measures, such as a forty percent increase in class time, and it will
27 achieve administrative efficiencies and make state-supported services
28 more easily recognizable and accessible to parents and families
29 eligible for these programs; and

1 (6) Providing quality early learning services for children from
2 birth to age three is the most cost-effective investment society can
3 make. Additionally, the state can use the demonstrated results from
4 the federal early head start program as an example to expand its reach
5 of services already provided to three and four-year old children to
6 children in the critical birth to three years age category.

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) Within existing funds, the department
8 shall develop a proposal for implementing a statewide Washington head
9 start program. To the extent possible while maintaining quality
10 standards, the proposal should align the state early childhood
11 education and assistance program with federal head start program
12 eligibility criteria, guidelines, performance standards, and
13 methods/processes for ensuring continuous improvement in program
14 quality. In this proposal, the department shall make recommendations
15 that:

16 (a) Identify federal head start program guidelines, performance
17 measures and standards, or other requirements for which state
18 flexibility would be recommended. This shall include an analysis of
19 how state flexibility may impact outcomes for children and how that
20 flexibility might deviate from outcomes associated with the federal
21 standards. Areas to be examined must include, but are not limited to,
22 transportation requirements, service hour configurations, delivery
23 methods, and impact on rural programs;

24 (b) Provide comparative data regarding child performance,
25 readiness, and educational outcomes for Washington's existing head
26 start and early childhood education and assistance programs;

27 (c) Determine the alignment between head start standards and the
28 recommendations of Washington learns;

29 (d) Identify any change in the state early childhood education and
30 assistance program laws that would be required to implement the
31 Washington head start proposal;

32 (e) Identify additional resources needed to meet federal guidelines
33 and standards. Areas to be examined must include, but are not limited
34 to: Per-child funding levels, professional development and training
35 needs, facilities needs, and technical assistance;

36 (f) Identify state early childhood education and assistance

1 programs that do and do not offer full-day, full-year services to
2 children, and what transition steps would be needed for these programs
3 to operate in the same manner as federal head start programs;

4 (g) Provide steps for phasing-in the Washington head start
5 proposal;

6 (h) Include a timeline, strategy, and funding needs to implement a
7 statewide, state-supported early head start program as a component of
8 the Washington head start proposal; and

9 (i) Detail the process the department would take with the regional
10 office of federal head start in identifying any exceptions or waivers
11 needed to provide flexibility and maintain high quality standards.

12 (2) In developing its recommendations for this proposal, the
13 department shall seek, where appropriate and available, training or
14 technical assistance from the appropriate regional office of federal
15 head start in order to maximize nonstate resources that might be
16 available for the consultative work and research involved with
17 developing this proposal. The department also shall consult with and
18 solicit input from:

19 (a) State early childhood education and assistance program
20 providers on Indian reservations and across the state, including
21 providers who operate solely state-supported programs;

22 (b) Tribal governments operating head start programs and early head
23 start programs in the state to ensure that the needs of Indian and
24 Alaskan native children and their families are incorporated into the
25 recommendations of the proposal, especially as they pertain to
26 standards or guidelines around language acquisition, school readiness,
27 availability and need for services among Indian and Alaskan native
28 children and their families, and curriculum development; and

29 (c) Providers operating migrant and seasonal head start programs in
30 the state in order to address the needs of the children of migrant and
31 seasonal farmworker families.

32 (3) The department shall make recommendations on how it would
33 periodically review the standards and guidelines within the Washington
34 head start program, including incorporation of the latest research and
35 information on early childhood development as well as any new
36 innovations that may further improve outcomes to low-income children
37 and their families.

1 (4) The department's recommendations on a Washington head start
2 proposal shall include how the proposal aligns with the department's
3 current statutory duties. The recommendations shall also include any
4 other options that may improve the quality of state-supported early
5 learning programs.

6 (5) The department shall deliver its report to the governor and
7 legislature by December 1, 2009.

8 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** Sections 1 and 2 of this act are each added
9 to chapter 43.215 RCW."

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10 On page 1, line 2 of the title, after "program;" insert "and adding
11 new sections to chapter 43.215 RCW."

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