
SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1815

State of Washington

63rd Legislature

2014 Regular Session

By House Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Moscoso, Appleton, Dahlquist, Ryu, Roberts, Pettigrew, Takko, Maxwell, Pollet, Fey, Santos, and Tharinger)

READ FIRST TIME 01/24/14.

1 AN ACT Relating to assuring that education-related information is
2 appropriately provided by public schools to parents with diverse
3 cultural and linguistic backgrounds; adding a new section to chapter
4 28A.300 RCW; and creating a new section.

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

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that:

7 (1) The number of foreign language speakers has substantially
8 increased in Washington's public schools over the last decade. The
9 office of the superintendent of public instruction reports that nine
10 percent of the state's total student population was enrolled in the
11 transitional bilingual instruction program as of May 2013, and more
12 than two hundred different languages are spoken in students' homes.

13 (2) Access to education-related information and communication in a
14 language they can understand helps limited English proficient parents
15 and guardians make informed decisions regarding their children's
16 academic future. Greater participation and involvement by parents and
17 families prevents students from dropping out of school, increases the
18 likelihood of student success in school, and contributes to closing the
19 educational opportunity gap.

1 (3) The office of the education ombuds reports an increased number
2 of complaints from English language learner students and limited
3 English proficient parents regarding lack of provision of accurate and
4 reliable interpretation and translation services for parents, as well
5 as having children act as interpreters during parent meetings.

6 (4) There are no certification programs in the state specifically
7 for K-12 education language interpreters, that is, bilingual adults who
8 are proficient in educational terminology, interpretation, and
9 translation. The lack of qualified individuals causes public schools
10 to use untrained bilingual adults or students themselves as
11 interpreters for school meetings with limited English proficient
12 parents. This practice creates an unfair disadvantage for English
13 language learner students as their parents might not receive accurate,
14 reliable information. Use of students in place of qualified adult
15 interpreters also places undue burdens on young children who may not
16 yet be fully proficient in either their native language or in English,
17 and undermines parental authority.

18 (5) Federal laws pertaining to the elementary and secondary
19 education act, civil rights, antidiscrimination, and migrant and
20 bilingual education, as well as state education laws and rules, affirm
21 the rights of parents of public school students to have access, as
22 practicable, to education-related information in a language they can
23 understand.

24 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.300
25 RCW to read as follows:

26 (1) Subject to funds appropriated for this specific purpose, by
27 June 1, 2015, the Washington state school directors' association,
28 together with the office of the education ombuds, the office of the
29 superintendent of public instruction, and representatives of the
30 educational opportunity gap oversight and accountability committee,
31 parents with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and
32 interested education associations, must develop a model language access
33 policy and procedure for adoption by school districts.

34 (2) At a minimum, the policy and procedure must:

35 (a) Be aligned with federal and state laws pertaining to the rights
36 of parents and legal guardians of public school students to language
37 access; and

1 (b) Require use of adult language interpreters, not students, for
2 school meetings with limited English proficient parents and legal
3 guardians about high-stakes educational situations.

4 (3) The work group convened under subsection (1) of this section
5 shall compile a list of guidelines, local and national best practices,
6 community resources, interpretation and translation contractual
7 services available in the state, and electronic and telephonic services
8 available for the provision of both oral interpretation and translation
9 of written communications for limited English proficient individuals.
10 The list must be made available through electronic means by September
11 1, 2015, and updated annually by the Washington state school directors'
12 association, the office of the education ombuds, the office of the
13 superintendent of public instruction, and the educational opportunity
14 gap oversight and accountability committee.

15 (4) The work group convened under subsection (1) of this section
16 shall also establish a definition of "high-stakes educational
17 situations" for use in the model language access policy and procedure.
18 In reviewing potential high-stakes educational situations, the work
19 group shall take into consideration discussions of academic progress or
20 academic deficiencies, health and safety, and disciplinary matters.

21 (5) For the purposes of this section, "language interpreter" means
22 a bilingual or multilingual individual who provides oral or written
23 language interpretation for others.

24 (6) By August 1, 2016, each school district board of directors
25 must, at a minimum, adopt the model language access policy and
26 procedure developed under this section.

--- END ---