
Education Committee

HB 1682

Brief Description: Improving educational outcomes for homeless students through increased in-school guidance supports, housing stability, and identification services.

Sponsors: Representatives Fey, Stambaugh, Walsh, Riccelli, Goodman, Orwall, Zeiger, Appleton, Van De Wege, Lytton, Gregerson, Reykdal, Tarleton, Ortiz-Self, Kagi, Carlyle, Wylie, Bergquist, S. Hunt, Tharinger, Senn, Robinson, Moscoso, Pollet, Walkinshaw, McBride and Jinkins.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Adds homeless student education liaisons to the minimum staffing allocation for district-wide support services.
- Tasks the Department of Commerce, in consultation with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), with administering a grant program that links homeless students and their families with stable housing located in the homeless student's school district.
- Requires that the OSPI's data collection and reporting on homeless children include data regarding "unaccompanied homeless students".

Hearing Date: 2/12/15

Staff: Cece Clynch (786-7195).

Background:

Prototypical School Funding Formula.

State funding for the Instructional Program of Basic Education is allocated through a funding formula based on assumed class size and the administrative, instructional, and classified staff needed for a prototypical elementary, middle, or high school of a particular size. There are also assumptions about materials, supplies, and operating costs, district-wide support services, central administration, and special programs. Details of the formula are specified in statute. Generally, this is a distribution formula and, except for certain exceptions, nothing requires school districts

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to use basic education instructional funds to implement a particular instructional approach or service.

The minimum staffing allocation for each school district to provide district-wide support services is allocated per 1000 annual average full-time equivalent students in grades K-12, as follows:

- Technology 0.628
- Facilities, maintenance, and grounds 1.813
- Warehouse, laborers, and mechanics 0.332

Homeless Assistance and Prevention Programs.

The Department of Commerce (Department) has a number of homeless assistance and prevention programs within its portfolio, including:

- Consolidated Homeless Grant (CHG). The CHG combines state homeless resources into a single grant opportunity for county governments and other designated entities.
- Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG). The ESG is funded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transitions to Housing Act of 2009. The Department is a grantee of HUD and administers this award for eligible counties and cities that are not direct recipients of HUD. The purpose of the ESG program is to provide homelessness prevention assistance to households who would otherwise become homeless and to provide assistance to rapidly re-house persons who are experiencing homelessness.
- Independent Youth Housing Program (IYHP). The IYHP provides rental assistance and case management for eligible youth who have aged out of the state foster care system. The Department contracts with five agencies to provide program services
- Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS (HOPWA). The HOPWA is a federally funded program providing housing assistance and supportive services for low-income people with HIV/AIDS and related diseases, and their families. The Department does not provide direct housing support or services to individuals or families, but administers funding to local providers within the state of Washington who, in turn, provide services to individuals and families.
- Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS). The HMIS is used by state and federally funded homeless and housing service providers to collect and manage data gathered during the course of providing housing assistance to people already experiencing homelessness and to households at-risk of losing their housing.

Summary of Bill:

Homeless Student Education Liaisons.

The minimum staffing allocation for each school district to provide district-wide support services is amended to also include homeless student education liaisons. The allocation per 1000 annual average full-time equivalent students in grades K-12 for these liaisons is 0.233.

The distribution formula for homeless student education liaisons is awarded only to districts that have demonstrated high need by identifying a minimum of 50 students as homeless. "Homeless students" are defined as students without a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence as set forth in the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. A maximum of five new full-time equivalents may be allocated to any single district.

Districts are required to use these funds for homeless student education liaisons. They may not use funds allocated pursuant to this formula to supplant existing resources for homeless student education liaisons, unless previously existing funds are used instead to support services for homeless students.

Homeless Student Grant Program.

In order to provide educational stability through housing stability, the Department of Commerce (Department), in consultation with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), is charged with administering a grant program that links homeless students and their families with stable housing located in the homeless student's school district. This competitive grant process may make grant awards of up to \$500,000 to school districts partnered with eligible organizations. The program is limited to 15 schools per school year.

In determining which school districts receive grants, preference must be given to districts with a demonstrated commitment of partnership and history with eligible organizations. "Eligible organization" means any local government, local housing authority, Regional Support Network, nonprofit community or neighborhood-based organization, federally recognized Indian tribe within the state, or regional or statewide nonprofit housing assistance organization.

Beneficiaries of funds from the grant program must be from very low-income households. "Very low-income" is defined as a family or unrelated persons living together whose adjusted income is less than 50 percent of the median family income, adjusted for household size, for the county where the grant recipient is located.

Applications for the grant program must include contractual agreements between the housing providers and the school districts defining the responsibilities and commitments of each party to identify, house, and support students. Eligible activities include, but are not limited to:

- Rental assistance, including security deposits, utilities and moving expenses.
- Transportation assistance, including gasoline for vehicles and bus passes.
- Emergency shelter.
- Housing stability case management.

Grantee school districts must report to the Legislature on the findings of the grantee, the housing stability of the homeless families, the academic performance of the grantee population, and any related policy recommendations.

Data on all program participants must be entered into and tracked through the Department's Homeless Client Management Information System.

The OSPI must monitor the programs at least once every two years, commencing with the 2015-16 school year, including monitoring the process used by the district to identify and reach out to homeless students, assessment data and other indicators to determine how well the district is meeting the academic needs of homeless students, district expenditures used to expand opportunities for these students, and the academic progress of students under the program. Program review and monitoring may be conducted concurrently with other program reviews and monitoring conducted by the Department.

"Unaccompanied Homeless Students".

The OSPI's data collection and reporting on homeless children must include data regarding "unaccompanied homeless students". "Unaccompanied homeless student" is defined as a student who is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian and is without a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence as set forth in the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: This bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed, except for section 3 relating to adding homeless student education liaisons under I-1351, which takes effect September 1, 2018. Section 4 relating to the grant program is null and void unless funded in the budget.