

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1999

As Reported by House Committee On: Early Learning & Human Services

Title: An act relating to coordinating services and programs for foster youth in order to improve educational outcomes.

Brief Description: Coordinating services and programs for foster youth in order to improve educational outcomes.

Sponsors: Representatives Carlyle, Kagi, Lytton, Walsh, Sawyer, Pettigrew, Ortiz-Self, Dent, Parker, Caldier, Goodman and Jinkins.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Early Learning & Human Services: 2/17/15, 2/20/15 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Moves responsibility for the educational coordination program for foster youth and demonstration site to improve educational outcomes for foster youth from the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.
- Moves responsibility for the Supplemental Educational Transition Program for foster youth from the DSHS to the Washington Student Achievement Council.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & HUMAN SERVICES

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Kagi, Chair; Walkinshaw, Vice Chair; Walsh, Ranking Minority Member; Scott, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Dent, Hawkins, Kilduff, McCaslin, Ortiz-Self, Sawyer and Senn.

Staff: Luke Wickham (786-7146).

Background:

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Education Coordination Program for Dependent Youth.

In 2012 the Legislature enacted Substitute House Bill 2254, which requires the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to contract with at least one nongovernmental entity that has demonstrated success in working with foster care youth in improving educational outcomes. The nongovernmental entity must:

- administer a program of educational coordination for foster youth in Washington from birth through twelfth grade;
- engage in a public-private partnership with the DSHS;
- raise a portion of the funds needed for service delivery, administration, and evaluation;
- provide services to support individual youth upon a referral by a social worker with the DSHS or nongovernmental agency;
- be collocated in the offices of the DSHS to provide timely consultation and in-service training; and
- report outcomes to the DSHS twice per year.

Demonstration Site to Improve Educational Outcomes for Dependent Youth.

The 2013-15 Operating Budget provided funding for the Children's Administration to contract with a nongovernmental entity to improve educational outcomes of dependent students by providing individualized education services and monitoring and supporting the completion of educational milestones, remediation needs, and special education needs of these students. This contract is performance-based with a stated goal of improving the graduation rates of foster youth by 2 percent per year over five school years.

The services required by the demonstration site include:

- direct advocacy for foster youth to eliminate barriers to educational access and success;
- consultation with the DSHS case workers to develop educational plans for and with participating youth;
- monitoring educational progress of participating youth;
- providing participating youth with school and local resources that may assist in educational access and success; and
- coaching youth, caregivers, and social workers to advocate for dependent youth in the educational system.

Passport to College Program.

The Passport to College Promise Scholarship program (Passport program) was established in 2007 to help dependent students attend and succeed in college. The three primary components of this program are administered by the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) and include:

- a student scholarship;
- campus incentive funding to provide recruitment and retention services; and
- a partnership with the College Success Foundation to provide support to students and training.

In the 2012-13 academic year, 404 students were served through the Passport program.

Supplemental Education Transition Program.

The Supplemental Education Transition Program is part of the Passport program that is managed by the DSHS, and requires the DSHS to contract with at least one nongovernmental entity to develop, implement, and administer a program of supplemental educational transition planning for youth beginning at age 14 in foster care. The supplemental transition planning must include:

- comprehensive information regarding postsecondary educational opportunities;
- how and when to apply to postsecondary educational programs;
- what precollege tests a foster youth should take based on his or her postsecondary plans;
- what courses a foster youth should take based on his or her postsecondary plans;
- issues that impact college students and their success rates; and
- which websites, nongovernmental entities, public agencies, and other foster youth support providers specialize in which services.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Program of Education Coordination for Dependent Youth.

The agency responsible for contracting with a nongovernmental agency to administer a program of education coordination for dependent youth is changed from the DSHS to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). A requirement is added to this contract, requiring that the contract be outcome-driven with a stated goal of reducing educational barriers to youth success.

Demonstration Sites to Improve Educational Outcomes for Dependent Youth.

The current demonstration program to improve educational outcomes for foster youth is maintained and expanded to include a second site. The agency contracting with the nongovernmental agency for this purpose is changed from the DSHS to the OSPI and the resulting contract must be outcome-driven.

The nongovernmental agency must engage in a public-private partnership with the OSPI and is responsible for raising a portion of the funds needed for service delivery, administration and evaluation.

The youth eligible for referral are expanded to include youth ages 13 through 21.

Supplemental Education Transitional Planning Program.

The Supplemental Education Transitional Planning (SETuP) program is moved from the DSHS to the WSAC. The youth served by this program are ages 13 through 21 and are not served by the demonstration sites described above. The contract for this service must be outcome-driven with a stated goal of improving the graduation rates and postsecondary plan initiation of eligible youth by 2 percent per year over five school years starting with the 2015-16 school year.

The SETuP program shall include:

- consultation with schools and the DSHS social workers to develop educational plans for and with participating youth;

- age-specific developmental and logistical tasks to be accomplished for high school and postsecondary success;
- facilitating youth participation with appropriate school and local resources that may assist in educational access and success; and
- coordinating with youth, caregivers, schools, and social workers to support youth progress in the educational system.

The SETuP program may be collocated in the DSHS and the nongovernmental entity must report outcomes to the WSAC and the DSHS twice per year.

Memoranda of Understanding.

The DSHS, the WSAC, and the OSPI shall enter into, or revise existing memoranda of understanding that:

- facilitate student referral, data and information exchange, agency roles and responsibilities, and cooperation and collaboration among state agencies and nongovernmental agencies; or
- effectuate transfer of responsibilities from the DSHS to the OSPI for the program of education coordination and demonstration sites described above, and from the DSHS to the WSAC for the SETuP program.

By November 1, 2016, and twice a year thereafter, the DSHS, the WSAC, and the OSPI shall submit a report to the Governor and appropriate committees of the Legislature regarding these programs and educational outcomes of foster youth. The DSHS, the WSAC, and the OSPI, in consultation with the nongovernmental entities, are also required to submit a report by November 1, 2018, to the Governor and Legislature regarding whether the transfer of programs from DSHS has resulted in better coordinated services for youth.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill requires the DSHS, the WSAC, and the OSPI, in consultation with the nongovernmental entities, to submit a report by November 1, 2018, to the Governor and Legislature regarding whether the transfer of programs from the DSHS has resulted in better coordinated services for youth.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) There were a group of agencies and nongovernmental entities that met during the interim to determine the best framework for educational services for foster youth, which resulted in this bill. There is remarkable consensus that this bill will help make Washington first in the nation in foster youth college graduation rates and postsecondary enrollment. This bill consolidates the education programs for foster youth with education-related agencies, the OSPI, and the WSAC. It requires that the contracts with nongovernmental entities are outcome-driven. There is a 73-percent private match for all the state funds provided for these programs. Many students in foster care come to school without getting their needs met. The Graduation Success program is result-oriented and helps serve these students. The education programs referenced in this bill involve checking in with students frequently to make sure that they are on track to attend college and succeed. There are many benefits from this program for students in foster care. This program relies on the philosophy that certain students need regular checking in, and the program often connects with students before school each morning. This program requires that there is a team of individuals that are checking in with students, social workers, and caregivers. If a student has missed three or more days of school, there is a flag to notify caregivers, social workers, and the student to correct the problem. Part of the Graduation Success program's responsibility is to help those students identify career and education fields so they can develop a post-high school plan. These programs help youth identify a career to work toward and the steps that are required to achieve that career. The model of checking in with students daily and helping plan for their future helps students. There is not much resistance from the education field related to the educational support services provided by nongovernmental entities. Ten years ago the graduation rate for foster youth in Washington was estimated at 31 percent, and it is now estimated at between 43 to 45 percent. Wrap-around services and infrastructure connecting the foster care system with the education world is necessary. When students miss school, most parents receive an email, phone call, and other notification that their child missed class. Many foster students do not get that service because they are not residing with their parents. These programs help address that communication gap. These programs are evidence-based. Washington is on the march to achieve the best graduation rates for foster youth. All the programs in this bill are subject to appropriation. A few years ago, there was a decision to focus on foster youth in King County and develop these programs. The whole educational community was brought together to identify this bill as the best next step in program development. These programs include more leveraging of private dollars than almost any other public-private partnership. The private partners ask that the state play a role in supporting this. There is a level of accountability in service delivery, and the flexibility exists for multiple partners. The DSHS does not have at its core a mission of education delivery. It is important to connect with local communities to see what works best for them. The linkage between the K-12 community and the higher education community has been a great success in the Passport program. The wrap-around services provided by the programs involved in this bill have played a key role in that success. Foster scholars with supplemental education support in high school and sustained support to postsecondary education are much more likely to succeed. The expansion included in this bill will allow more foster scholars to succeed in postsecondary education. The transfer of agency responsibility in this bill will help consolidate accountability and responsibility. Right now there is a disconnect between some of these programs, which would be eliminated by this bill. This will also lead to more consistent alignment of services. There are nonprofits around the state that provide SETuP services. The components of this bill will result in better educational outcomes for foster youth. After foster youth are able to access these programs,

many of these youth are able to improve their grades. Having a support network of individuals that care about foster youth helps these youth succeed. The SETuP program's main goal is to provide services to support a foster youth's own goals. Although Washington has made great strides to support foster youth, more work remains. The adults in the lives of foster youth are often ill-equipped to support those youth in their educational pursuits. It is much more effective to involve professionals in this activity. The OSPI is supportive of this bill. There has been an increase in educational outcomes over the past few years related to the programs involved in this bill. The Comprehensive Education Data and Research System school does include an indication that a youth is involved with the foster care system. Schools have been developing relationships between caseworkers, school counselors, and teachers. Many of the barriers between these communities have been removed.

(In support with amendment(s)) There is an ongoing conversation regarding whether RCW 13.50 needs to be modified or simply referenced as it is currently in the bill.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Carlyle, prime sponsor; Alan Spicciati, Highline School District; Angela Griffin and Janis Avery, Treehouse; Katie Kaiser, College Success Foundation; Sabian Hart-Wall, Community Youth Services; Timothy Bell, Foster Care Alumni of America; and Ken Emmil, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

(In support with amendment(s)) David DelVillar Fox, Department of Social and Health Services Children's Administration.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.