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HOUSE BILL 2610

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State of Washington

65th Legislature

2018 Regular Session

By Representatives Peterson, Bergquist, Pollet, Gregerson, Appleton, Valdez, Ryu, Jinkins, Macri, Tarleton, Hudgins, McBride, Doglio, Stonier, Fey, Goodman, Santos, Frame, and Stanford

Read first time 01/11/18. Referred to Committee on Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to a hunger-free students' bill of rights; adding  
2 new sections to chapter 28A.235 RCW; and creating a new section.

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

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.235  
5 RCW to read as follows:

6 (1)(a) Except as provided otherwise in subsection (2) of this  
7 section, each school that participates in the national school lunch  
8 program, the school breakfast program, or both, shall annually  
9 distribute and collect an application for all households of children  
10 in kindergarten through grade twelve to determine student eligibility  
11 for free or reduced-price meals. If a parent or guardian of a student  
12 needs assistance with application materials in a language other than  
13 English, the school shall offer appropriate assistance to the parent  
14 or guardian.

15 (b) If a student who, based on information available to the  
16 school, is likely eligible for free or reduced-price meals but has  
17 not submitted an application to determine eligibility, the school  
18 shall, in accordance with the authority granted under 7 C.F.R. Sec.  
19 245.6(d), complete and submit the application for the student.

20 (2) Subsection (1) of this section does not apply to a school  
21 that provides free meals to all students in a year in which the

1 school does not collect applications to determine student eligibility  
2 for free or reduced-price meals.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.235  
4 RCW to read as follows:

5 Local liaisons for homeless children and youths designated by  
6 districts in accordance with the federal McKinney-Vento homeless  
7 assistance act 42 U.S.C. Sec. 11431 et seq. must coordinate with the  
8 applicable school nutrition program to ensure that each homeless  
9 student has proper access to free school meals and that applicable  
10 accountability and reporting requirements are satisfied.

11 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.235  
12 RCW to read as follows:

13 (1)(a) Unless requested otherwise in writing by the student's  
14 parent or guardian, all schools shall provide a meal that qualifies  
15 for federal reimbursement as either a free or reduced-price lunch  
16 under the national school lunch program, or a free or reduced-price  
17 breakfast under the school breakfast program, to each student  
18 requesting a meal. The provision of the meal may not be conditioned  
19 on the student's ability to pay for the meal or for any amount owed  
20 for meals previously served to the student.

21 (b) No school may require a student to dispose of or otherwise  
22 surrender a served meal because of the student's inability to pay for  
23 the meal or meals previously served to the student.

24 (2) If a student has not paid for five or more previous meals,  
25 the school shall:

26 (a) Determine whether the student is categorically eligible for  
27 free meals;

28 (b) If no application has been submitted for the student to  
29 determine his or her eligibility for free or reduced-price meals,  
30 make no fewer than two attempts to contact the student's parent or  
31 guardian to have him or her submit an application; and

32 (c) Have a principal, assistant principal, or school counselor  
33 contact the parent or guardian for the purpose of: (i) Offering  
34 assistance with completing an application to determine the student's  
35 eligibility for free or reduced-price meals; (ii) determining whether  
36 there are any household issues that may prevent the student from  
37 having sufficient funds for school meals; and (iii) offering any  
38 appropriate assistance.

1        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 4.**    A new section is added to chapter 28A.235  
2    RCW to read as follows:

3        (1) No school or district may:

4        (a) Publicly identify or stigmatize, or take any action that  
5    would likely publicly identify or stigmatize, a student who cannot  
6    pay for a school meal or for meals previously served to the student;

7        (b) Require a student who cannot pay for a school meal or for  
8    meals previously served to the student to perform chores or other  
9    actions in exchange for a meal or for the reduction or elimination of  
10   a school meal debt; or

11       (c) Require a parent or guardian to pay fees or costs from  
12   collection agencies hired by the school or district to collect  
13   amounts owed for meals previously served to the student.

14       (2) Communications from a school or district about amounts owed  
15   for meals previously served to the student may only be directed to  
16   the student's parent or guardian. Nothing in this subsection  
17   prohibits a school or district from sending a student home with a  
18   letter that is addressed to a parent or guardian.

19       NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 5.**    This act may be known and cited as the  
20   hunger-free students' bill of rights act.

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