

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2711

As Reported by House Committee On:
Education

Title: An act relating to equitable educational outcomes for foster care and homeless children and youth from prekindergarten to postsecondary education.

Brief Description: Increasing equitable educational outcomes for foster care and homeless children and youth from prekindergarten to postsecondary education.

Sponsors: Representatives Johnson, J., Corry, Stonier, Ormsby, Appleton, Caldier, Davis, Leavitt, Lekanoff, Ramel, Senn, Chopp, Goodman, Fey, Pollet, Callan and Chambers.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 1/28/20, 2/6/20 [DPS].

Brief Summary of First Substitute Bill

- Requires the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, in collaboration with specified state agencies, to convene a work group to develop and implement a plan for achieving parity in educational outcomes and eliminating racial and ethnic gaps for children and youth in foster care, experiencing homelessness, or both.
- Prescribes tasks for the work group, including reviewing the educational outcomes of children and youth in foster care, homelessness, or both, and preparing a biannual report that summarizes the progress the state has made toward achieving related goals.
- Modifies provisions governing a biannual report for specified educational outcomes programs.
- Removes an expired reporting requirement regarding specific efforts to promote educational stability and improve educational outcomes for children in foster care

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 17 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Dolan, Vice Chair; Paul, Vice Chair; Steele, Ranking Minority Member; McCaslin, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Volz, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Caldier, Callan, Corry, Harris, Ortiz-Self, Rude, Stonier, Thai, Valdez and Ybarra.

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

Staff: Ethan Moreno (786-7386)

Background:

Department of Children, Youth, and Families.

Legislation adopted in 2017 created the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). The Children's Administration division is located within the DCYF and includes Child Protective Services, the Family Assessment Response program, foster care, and adoption support.

Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) supports students in foster care by encouraging innovative practices that reduce educational disruptions, threaten school stability, and improve academic performance. The OSPI designates a statewide education of homeless children and youth coordinator to review policies and create procedures to ensure that children and youth experiencing homelessness can attend school.

Student Achievement Council.

The Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) provides strategic planning, oversight, advocacy, and programs to support increased student success and higher levels of educational attainment in Washington.

Project Education Impact Work Group.

A 2018 budget proviso directed the DCYF in collaboration with the OSPI, the Office of Homeless Youth (OHY), and the WSAC, to convene the Project Education Impact Work Group (Work Group) with aligned nonprofit organizations to create a plan for children and youth experiencing foster care and homelessness, facilitate educational equity, and to close the disparities between racial and ethnic groups by 2027.

This Work Group submitted a report in January of 2019 that recommended legislative and administrative changes necessary to achieve these goals. The report also recommended that the Work Group continue to convene to develop, implement and refine solutions, and to evaluate collective progress over time.

Programs of Education for Dependent Youth.

The OSPI and the WSAC are required to create and maintain outcome-driven services to support foster youth in completing high school and to enroll in, and complete postsecondary education. These services include contracts between the DCYF and the OSPI, and the DCYF and the WSAC, that require partnership with at least one nongovernmental agency to administer an individualized education coordination program for dependent youth.

A report related to the collective progress toward making Washington first in the nation for foster care performance metrics must be submitted by the OSPI, the WSAC, and the DCYF to the Governor and Legislature biannually.

Summary of Bill (First Substitute):

Project Education Impact Work Group. The OSPI, in collaboration with the DCYF, the OHY, and the WSAC is directed to convene the Project Education Impact Work Group (Work Group). The Work Group, which must include aligned nongovernmental agencies

and a statewide nonprofit coalition that is representative of communities of color and people living in low-income communities, is directed to:

1. focus on students in foster care, experiencing homelessness, or both, in pre-kindergarten through postsecondary education;
2. implement a plan for children and youth in foster care, experiencing homelessness, or both to achieve parity and eliminate racial and ethnic disparities in educational outcomes by 2027;
3. annually review educational outcome data of children and youth in foster care, experiencing homelessness, or both including kindergarten readiness, school stability, and postsecondary status;
4. evaluate outcomes, needs, and services for children and youth in foster care, experiencing homelessness, or both, and the specific needs of children and youth of color and those with special education needs;
5. engage specific stakeholders to provide biannual recommendations;
6. and submit a report to the Governor and the Legislature by October 31, 2020 and biannually thereafter on the progress made towards educational parity for children and youth in foster care, experiencing homelessness, or both, and updates on related actions and goals, including recommendations to align and improve policy, programs, agency practice, and student supports.

Biannual Report of the Department of Children, Youth, and Families, the Washington Student Achievement Council, and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Reporting requirements of the DCYF, the WSAC, and the OSPI are modified to a biannual report on collective progress related to becoming first in the nation in foster care according to specific performance metrics.

Cross-system Collaboration Reports.

An expired reporting requirement regarding the state's plan for cross-system collaboration to promote educational stability and improved educational outcomes for foster children is repealed.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill

The Project Education Impact Work Group proposed in the original bill is instead reconvened as a task force to address the needs of students in foster care, experiencing homelessness, or both. The chairs and ranking members of the committees of the House of Representatives and the Senate with jurisdiction over education, early learning, and human services issues are added to the task force. The substitute bill replaces the requirement of representation from a statewide nonprofit coalition that is representative of communities of color and people living in low-income communities with representation from the Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee (EOGOAC). The substitute bill adds the EOGOAC as a recipient for reports created by the task force. The provisions establishing and governing the task force expire on December 1, 2022. The establishes a definition of "students in foster care, experiencing homelessness, or both."

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 24, 2020.

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) This bill is a solution to address need, trauma, and lack of access in our educational system. Students that are considered homeless or in foster care are regularly absent from school much more frequently than their general student peers. Many students are referred to the juvenile system, and a lot of them are experiencing homelessness, in foster care, or both. The Project Education Impact Work Group (Work Group) can help address the barriers that these students are experiencing and promote physical, mental, and social health of our young people.

The Work Group focuses on children and youth in foster care, experiencing homelessness, or both. These two populations experience similar educational challenges and outcomes that are grounded in instability and relocation from homes and schools. When students change districts, consistent records and appropriate services are difficult to maintain. The experiences of these two groups persist or worsen over time without adequate support. Extensive programs exist for these populations, and the goal of the Work Group is to bring these resources together. This bill creates a framework for sustainability and accountability in the event of an administration or leadership change and helps provide necessary data to achieve these goals. By establishing a Work Group at the state level, students are assured appropriate access to the resources available to them.

Necessary infrastructure is provided in this bill to address the federal mandate in the Every Student Succeeds Act and to reach goals related to state graduation rates.

(Opposed) None.

(Other) This bill allows for a full picture of the educational pipeline for student enrollment gaps through accurate and disaggregated data. The 2018 data was limited to a two-year scope and this helps address the short timeline restriction of the available data.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Johnson, prime sponsor; Dawn Rains, Treehouse; Katara Jordan, Building Changes; Peggy Carlson, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; and Alexandra Franks-Thomas, Washington State Association of School Psychologists.

(Other) Becky Thompson, Washington Student Achievement Council.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.