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**SENATE BILL 5184**

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**State of Washington 67th Legislature 2021 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Nobles, Wellman, Billig, Carlyle, Conway, Das, Dhingra, Frockt, Hasegawa, Hunt, Kuderer, Liias, Lovelett, Nguyen, Randall, Saldaña, Salomon, and Wilson, C.; by request of Superintendent of Public Instruction

AN ACT Relating to establishing a building point of contact in all K-12 public schools for students in foster care; amending RCW 28A.320.148; and creating a new section.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The legislature acknowledges that students in foster care often face additional challenges, both academically and emotionally. When students are connected with a caring adult, are attending school regularly, and have the supports they need, they are more likely to be successful in school and in life. Schools, child welfare agencies, communities, and families must work together to provide the equitable opportunities, specialized services, and useful supports that are essential for students in foster care. By establishing a building point of contact, the legislature intends to further support coordination of resources and facilitation of compliance with state and federal laws related to students who are dependent pursuant to chapter 13.34 RCW.

**Sec.**  RCW 28A.320.148 and 2018 c 139 s 3 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) Each school district must designate a foster care liaison to facilitate district compliance with state and federal laws related to students ((~~in out-of-home care~~)) who are dependent pursuant to chapter 13.34 RCW and to collaborate with the department of children, youth, and families to address educational barriers for these students. The role and responsibilities of a foster care liaison may include:

(a) Coordinating with the department of children, youth, and families on the implementation of state and federal laws related to students ((~~in out-of-home care~~)) who are dependent pursuant to chapter 13.34 RCW;

(b) Coordinating with foster care education program staff at the office of the superintendent of public instruction;

(c) Attending training and professional development opportunities to improve school district implementation efforts;

(d) Serving as the primary contact person for representatives of the department of children, youth, and families;

(e) Leading and documenting the development of a process for making best interest determinations in accordance with RCW 28A.225.350;

(f) Facilitating immediate enrollment in accordance with RCW 28A.225.330;

(g) Facilitating the transfer of records in accordance with RCW 28A.150.510 and 28A.225.330;

(h) Facilitating data sharing with child welfare agencies consistent with state and federal privacy laws and rules;

(i) Developing and coordinating local transportation procedures;

(j) Managing best interest determination and transportation cost disputes according to the best practices developed by the office of the superintendent of public instruction;

(k) Ensuring that students ((~~in out-of-home care~~)) who are dependent pursuant to chapter 13.34 RCW are enrolled in and regularly attending school, consistent with RCW 28A.225.023; and

(l) Providing professional development and training to school staff on state and federal laws related to students ((~~in out-of-home care~~)) who are dependent pursuant to chapter 13.34 RCW and their educational needs, as needed.

(2) ((~~For the purposes of this section, "out-of-home care" has the same meaning as in RCW 13.34.030.~~)) Each K-12 public school in the state must establish a building point of contact in each elementary school, middle school, and high school. These points of contact must be appointed by the principal of the designated school, in consultation with the district foster care liaison, and are responsible for coordinating services and resources for students in foster care as outlined in subsection (1) of this section.

(3) The district foster care liaison is responsible for training building points of contact.

(4) The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall make available best practices for choosing and training building points of contact to each school district.

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