
HOUSE BILL 2012

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2025 Regular Session

By Representatives Bergquist, Couture, Ormsby, Pollet, Nance, Gregerson, and Scott

Read first time 02/21/25. Referred to Committee on Appropriations.

1 AN ACT Relating to funding the transition to kindergarten program
2 at the 2024-25 school year program enrollment level of each school
3 district, charter school, and state-tribal education compact school
4 operating a program; amending RCW 28A.300.072; and making
5 appropriations.

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

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The sum of \$16,216,000, or as much thereof
8 as may be necessary, is appropriated from the state general fund for
9 the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025, and the sum of \$4,709,000, or
10 as much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated from the state
11 general fund for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026, to the office
12 of the superintendent of public instruction, and is provided solely
13 for allocation to school districts, charter schools authorized under
14 RCW 28A.710.080(2), and state-tribal education compact schools
15 subject to chapter 28A.715 RCW, as payment during the 2024-25 school
16 year for the transition to kindergarten program established under
17 chapter 28A.300 RCW.

18 **Sec. 2.** RCW 28A.300.072 and 2023 c 420 s 1 are each amended to
19 read as follows:

1 (1) The intent of the legislature is to continue and rename
2 transitional kindergarten as the transition to kindergarten program
3 and that the program be established in statute with the goal of
4 assisting eligible children in need of additional preparation to be
5 successful kindergarten students in the following school year. The
6 transition to kindergarten program is not part of the state's
7 statutory program of basic education under RCW 28A.150.200.

8 (2)(a) The office of the superintendent of public instruction
9 shall administer the transition to kindergarten program and shall
10 adopt rules under chapter 34.05 RCW for the administration of, the
11 allocation of state funding for, and minimum standards and
12 requirements for the transition to kindergarten program. Initial
13 rules, which include expectations for school districts, charter
14 schools as allowed by subsection (7) of this section, and state-
15 tribal education compact schools transitioning existing programs to
16 the new requirements established in this section must be adopted in
17 time for the 2023-24 school year, and permanent rules must be adopted
18 by the beginning of the 2024-25 school year.

19 (b) School districts, charter schools as allowed by subsection
20 (7) of this section, and state-tribal education compact schools
21 operating a transition to kindergarten program shall adopt policies
22 regarding eligibility, recruitment, and enrollment for this program
23 that, at a minimum, meet the requirements of subsection (3) of this
24 section.

25 (3) The rules adopted under subsection (2) of this section must
26 include, at a minimum, the following requirements for school
27 districts, charter schools as allowed by subsection (7) of this
28 section, and state-tribal education compact schools operating a
29 transition to kindergarten program:

30 (a)(i) A limitation on program enrollment to eligible children.
31 Eligible children include only those who:

32 (A) Have been determined to benefit from additional preparation
33 for kindergarten; and

34 (B) Are at least four years old by August 31st of the school year
35 they enroll in the transition to kindergarten program;

36 (ii) A requirement, as practicable, for school districts, charter
37 schools as allowed by subsection (7) of this section, and state-
38 tribal education compact schools to prioritize families with the
39 lowest incomes and children most in need for additional preparation

1 to be successful in kindergarten when enrolling eligible children in
2 a transition to kindergarten program;

3 (iii) Access to the transition to kindergarten program does not
4 constitute an individual entitlement for any particular child.

5 (b) Except for children who have been excused from participation
6 by their parents or legal guardians, a requirement that the
7 Washington kindergarten inventory of developing skills as established
8 by RCW 28A.655.080 be administered to all eligible children enrolled
9 in a transition to kindergarten program at the beginning of the
10 child's enrollment in the program and at least one more time during
11 the school year.

12 (c) A requirement that all eligible children enrolled in a
13 transition to kindergarten program be assigned a statewide student
14 identifier and that the transition to kindergarten program be
15 considered a separate class or course for the purposes of data
16 reporting requirements in RCW 28A.320.175.

17 (d) A requirement that a local child care and early learning
18 needs assessment is conducted before beginning or expanding a
19 transition to kindergarten program that considers the existing
20 availability and affordability of early learning providers, such as
21 the early childhood education and assistance programs, head start
22 programs, and licensed child care centers and family home providers
23 in the region. Data available through the regionalized data dashboard
24 maintained by the department of children, youth, and families or any
25 other appropriate sources may be used to inform the needs assessment
26 required by this subsection.

27 (e) (i) A requirement that school districts, charter schools as
28 allowed by subsection (7) of this section, and state-tribal education
29 compact schools adhere to guidelines, as developed by the office of
30 the superintendent of public instruction, related to:

31 (A) Best practices for site readiness of facilities that are used
32 for the program;

33 (B) Developmentally appropriate curricula designed to assist in
34 maintaining high quality programs; and

35 (C) Professional development opportunities.

36 (ii) The office of the superintendent of public instruction must
37 develop a process for conducting site visits of any school district,
38 charter school as allowed by subsection (7) of this section, or
39 state-tribal education compact school operating a transition to

1 kindergarten program and provide feedback on elements listed in this
2 subsection (3) (e).

3 (f) A prohibition on charging tuition or other fees to state-
4 funded eligible children for enrollment in a transition to
5 kindergarten program.

6 (g) A prohibition on establishing a policy of excluding an
7 eligible child due only to the presence of a disability.

8 (4) (a) The office of the superintendent of public instruction, in
9 collaboration with the department of children, youth, and families,
10 shall develop statewide coordinated eligibility, recruitment,
11 enrollment, and selection best practices and provide technical
12 assistance to those implementing a transition to kindergarten program
13 to support connections with local early learning providers.

14 (b) School districts, charter schools as allowed by subsection
15 (7) of this section, and state-tribal education compact schools must
16 consider the best practices developed under this subsection (4) when
17 adopting the policies required under subsection (2) (b) of this
18 section.

19 (5) Nothing in this section prohibits school districts, charter
20 schools as allowed by subsection (7) of this section, and state-
21 tribal education compact schools from blending or colocating a
22 transition to kindergarten program with other early learning
23 programs.

24 (6) (a) (~~Funding~~) Subject to (b) of this subsection, state
25 funding for the transition to kindergarten program must be based on
26 the following:

27 (i) The distribution formula established under RCW 28A.150.260
28 (4) (a), (5), (6), (8), and (10) (a) and (b), calculated using the
29 actual number of annual average full-time equivalent eligible
30 children enrolled in the program. A transition to kindergarten child
31 must be counted as a kindergarten student for purposes of the funding
32 calculations referenced in this subsection, but must be reported
33 separately.

34 (ii) The distribution formula developed in RCW 28A.160.150
35 through 28A.160.192, calculated using reported ridership for eligible
36 children enrolled in the program.

37 (b) Beginning with the 2025-26 school year, the annual average
38 full-time equivalent enrollment of eligible children in each program
39 funded under (a) of this subsection operated by a school district,
40 charter school as allowed by subsection (7) of this section, or

1 state-tribal education compact school, may not exceed the annual
2 average full-time equivalent enrollment of eligible children in the
3 same school district, charter school as allowed by subsection (7) of
4 this section, or state-tribal education compact school program during
5 the 2024-25 school year.

6 (c) Funding provided for the transition to kindergarten program
7 is not part of the state's statutory program of basic education under
8 RCW 28A.150.200 and must be expended only for the support of
9 operating a transition to kindergarten program.

10 (7) Charter schools authorized under RCW 28A.710.080(2) are
11 immediately permitted to operate a transition to kindergarten program
12 under this section. Beginning with the 2025-26 school year, any
13 charter school authorized under RCW 28A.710.080 (1) or (2) is
14 permitted to operate a transition to kindergarten program under this
15 section.

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