

WASHINGTON 2003 LEGISLATIVE SERVICE

58th Legislature, 2003 Regular Session

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Vetoed provisions within tabular material are not displayed.

CHAPTER 112

S.H.B. No. 1058

EDUCATION--CHILDREN AND MINORS--FOSTER CARE

AN ACT Relating to educational attainment of children in foster care; adding new sections to chapter 74.13 RCW; and creating a new section.

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

NEW SECTION. Sec. 1. The legislature finds that the educational attainment of children in foster care is significantly lower than that of children not in foster care. The legislature finds that many factors influence educational outcomes for children in foster care, including the disruption of the educational process because of repeatedly changing schools.

The legislature recognizes the importance of educational stability for foster children, and encourages the ongoing efforts of the department of social and health services and the office of the superintendent of public instruction to improve educational attainment of children in foster care. It is the intent of the legislature that efforts continue such as the recruitment of foster homes in school districts with high rates of foster care placements, the development and dissemination of informational materials regarding the challenges faced by children in foster care, and the expansion to other school districts of best practices identified in pilot projects.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 2. A new section is added to chapter 74.13 RCW to read as follows:

<< WA ST 74.13 >>

It is the policy of the state of Washington that, whenever practical and in the best interest of the child, children placed into foster care shall remain enrolled in the schools they were attending at the time they entered foster care.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 3. A new section is added to chapter 74.13 RCW to read as follows:

<< WA ST 74.13 >>

The administrative regions of the department shall develop protocols with the respective school districts in their regions specifying specific strategies for communication, coordination, and collaboration regarding the status and progress of foster children placed in the region, in order to maximize the educational continuity and achievement for foster children. The protocols shall include methods to assure effective sharing of information consistent with RCW 28A.225.330.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 4. A new section is added to chapter 74.13 RCW to read as follows:

<< WA ST 74.13 >>

(1) The department shall establish an oversight committee composed of staff from the children's administration of the department, the office of the superintendent of public instruction, and advocacy agencies to develop strategies for maintaining foster children in the schools they were attending at the time they entered foster care.

(2) The duties of the oversight committee shall include, but are not limited to:

(a) Developing strategies for school-based recruitment of foster homes;

(b) Monitoring the progress of current pilot projects that assist foster children to continue attending the schools they were attending at the time they entered foster care;

(c) Overseeing the expansion of the number of pilot projects;

(d) Promoting the use of best practices, throughout the state, demonstrated by the pilot projects and other programs relating to maintaining foster children in

the schools they were attending at the time they entered foster care; and

(e) Informing the legislature of the status of efforts to maintain foster children in the schools they were attending at the time they entered foster care.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 5. A new section is added to chapter 74.13 RCW to read as follows:

<< WA ST 74.13 >>

The department shall work with the administrative office of the courts to develop protocols to ensure that educational stability is addressed during the shelter care hearing.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 6. A new section is added to chapter 74.13 RCW to read as follows:

<< WA ST 74.13 >>

The department shall perform the tasks provided in sections 2 through 5 of this act based on available resources.

Approved May 7, 2003.

Effective July 27, 2003.