

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

DATE: July 15, 2004

BETWEEN: Department of Social and Health Services, and
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

REGARDING: Substitute House Bill 1058: Educational Stability for
Children in Foster Care

PURPOSE:

The Children's Administration of the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) acknowledge the commitment of both agencies to proactively address the educational needs of foster care students in the schools.

In the interest of continuing to serve children well, and to comply with recent state law in RCW 74.13.550 et seq., originating with Substitute House Bill (SHB) 1058, that requires OSPI and DSHS to work together to improve educational outcomes for children in foster care, OSPI and DSHS enter into this Memorandum of Understanding.

The overall objective of this agreement is to address the legislature's intent as expressed in Substitute House Bill 1058, i.e.,

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.

The objective of this agreement is also to raise awareness of the needs of foster care students, to strengthen collaboration between the two agencies, and to promote academic success for students in foster care. This includes collaborative staff training, inter-systems communication and joint social/academic planning and support for foster care children in schools across the state.

An implementation oversight committee consisting of representatives from DSHS, OSPI, the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), school districts, Educational Service Districts, and advocacy organizations was established to develop strategies for collaboration, coordination, and communication. DSHS and OSPI acknowledge that ongoing participation in the process by both public and private organizations is a key component to achieving success in the effort to improve the educational attainment of foster care students.

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The Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) of Children's Administration at DSHS will enter into local agreements with school districts that will include protocols and strategies developed through a collaborative process to address the following areas:

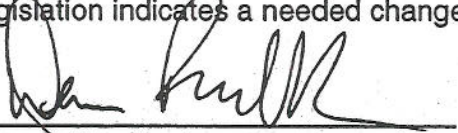
- Transfer of records;
- Academic planning;
- School-based recruitment of foster parents;
- Transportation;
- Confidentiality; and
- Data-sharing.

Protocols and local agreements shall be in accord with the expressed intent of SHB 1058, as codified in Chapter 74.13 beginning at RCW 74.13.550.

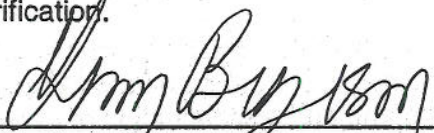
OSPI will collaborate with DSHS to provide information to the school districts in support of this effort to improve educational outcomes for children in foster care, and to facilitate the local agreements with the school districts.

DSHS and OSPI will work with each other, and with the oversight committee, to meet those requirements, goals, and expectations of SHB 1058 that may not be specifically identified in this Memorandum of Understanding, within the respective agencies' available resources to do so.

This Memorandum of Understanding shall be effective beginning July 1, 2004 and shall remain in effect until either party requests to modify or amend the document or until new legislation indicates a needed change or clarification.



Dennis Braddock
Secretary
Department of Social & Health Services



Dr. Terry Bergeson
State Superintendent
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction