
**Early Learning & Human Services
Committee**

HB 1566

Brief Description: Concerning educational outcomes of youth in out-of-home care.

Sponsors: Representatives Carlyle, Kagi, Ryu, Roberts, Moscoso and Pollet.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires that certain youth in care receive an educational liaison.
- Expands eligibility requirements for Passport to College Promise Program.
- Outlines responsibilities of the educational liaison, the Department of Social and Health Services, school districts, and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for youth in grades six-to-12 and who are in the conservatorship of the state.

Hearing Date: 2/12/13

Staff: Lindsay Lanham (786-7120).

Background:

Beginning in 2001 the Washington State Legislature, the Department of Social and Health Services Children's Administration (DSHS), the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), and the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) have collaborated to study and develop strategies to improve educational outcomes for youth residing in out-of-home placements.

Between the years of November 2001 through December 2012, WSIPP completed 13 evaluations that examine an array of educational outcomes for youth in foster care and studied the impact of specific interventions aimed to improve educational achievement for said youth. Additionally, Substitute House Bill 2679 (SHB 2679) required that OSPI complete annual reports for the legislature that examine the experiences and educational outcomes for youth in foster care.

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

Substitute House Bill 1058 (SHB 1058) required the DSHS to maximize educational continuity and achievement for foster children. Substitute House Bill 1058 mandated, among other provisions, that the DSHS form a multidisciplinary oversight committee to promote best case practice for staff working with school-age youth who are residing in foster homes and monitor educational outcomes. The collaboration continues to meet and develop action plans to strengthen educational success for children and youth in foster care.

In 2004 the Braam settlement agreement, further required the DSHS, to create benchmark measures for school stability with an annual goal of no more than 20 percent of youth in the state's care changing schools during a given school year. According to BraamKids, the DSHS is currently in full compliance with the educational benchmark as listed in the Braam settlement.

Summary of Bill:

The DSHS is required to identify an educational liaison at shelter care hearings and all subsequent hearings for youth in grades six-to-12 and who meet certain eligibility requirements. It is preferred that the educational liaison be known to the child and be a relative, fictive kin, or the youth's foster parent. A birth parent with a primary plan of family reunification may also service as the educational liaison.

The expectations of education liaison are outlined and an example of expectations include, but are not limited to, attend school meetings, provide educational advocacy for the youth, seek to understand the youth's academic strengths and future goals, and explore barriers and opportunities for the youth to participate in extracurricular activities.

It is the responsibility of the DSHS to discuss and document any school transfers at Family Team Decision-Making Meetings, to enroll the youth in school, to obtain missing academic or medical records required for school enrollment, to pay any unpaid fines due by the youth to the school district, to document factors contributing to any school disruptions, to pay for transportation costs for a youth to attend his or her school of origin when the youth has been in out-of-home care for over 12 months, to provide all necessary training to the educational liaison, and collaborate with OSPI and the Washington Student Achievement Council to develop a reporting strategy to provide annual reports to the legislature. Additionally, eligibility requirements for Passport to College Promise Program expand to include youth participating in extended foster care or a youth achieving a permanent plan after age 17-1/2 years of age.

A school district representative or school employee are required to review and determine the cause of unexpected absences and proactively support the youth so the youth does not fall behind. A school district cannot prevent a youth from enrolling in school if there is incomplete information needed for enrollment.

Finally, OSPI must work with a non-profit in Western Washington to establish one demonstration site and offer an intervention. The purpose of the intervention is to improve educational outcomes for youth who are 15 years and older and residing in foster care. The intervention includes providing direct advocacy, develop educational plans, and monitor educational progress.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Preliminary fiscal note available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.