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**SENATE BILL 5324**

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**State of Washington**

**66th Legislature**

**2019 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Frockt, Zeiger, Darneille, Walsh, Kuderer, Palumbo, Das, Hasegawa, Hunt, Wellman, Cleveland, Pedersen, Keiser, Nguyen, McCoy, and Van De Wege

1 AN ACT Relating to support for students experiencing  
2 homelessness; and amending RCW 28A.300.542, 43.185C.340, and  
3 28A.320.142.

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

5 **Sec. 1.** RCW 28A.300.542 and 2016 c 157 s 2 are each amended to  
6 read as follows:

7 (1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this  
8 specific purpose, the office of the superintendent of public  
9 instruction shall create a competitive grant process to evaluate and  
10 award state-funded grants to school districts to increase  
11 identification of (~~homeless~~) students experiencing homelessness and  
12 the capacity of the districts to provide support(~~(, which may include~~  
13 ~~education liaisons, for homeless students)~~) for students experiencing  
14 homelessness. Funds may be used in a manner that is complementary to  
15 federal McKinney-Vento funds and consistent with allowable uses as  
16 determined by the office of the superintendent of public instruction.  
17 The process must complement any similar federal grant program or  
18 programs in order to minimize agency overhead and administrative  
19 costs for the superintendent of public instruction and school  
20 districts. School districts may access both federal and state funding  
21 to identify and support homeless students.

1 (2) Award criteria for the state grants must be based on the  
2 demonstrated need of the school district and may consider the number  
3 or overall percentage, or both, of homeless children and youths  
4 enrolled in preschool, elementary, and secondary schools in the  
5 school district, and the ability of the local school district to meet  
6 these needs. Award criteria for these must also be based on the  
7 quality of the applications submitted. ((Preference)) Selected  
8 grantees must reflect geographic diversity across the state. Greater  
9 weight must be given to districts that demonstrate a commitment to:

10 (a) Partnering with local housing and community-based  
11 organizations;

12 (b) Serving the needs of unaccompanied youth; and

13 (c) Implementing strategies to address the opportunity gap and  
14 other systemic inequities that negatively impact homeless students  
15 and students of color. Specific strategies may include, but are not  
16 limited to:

17 (i) Enhancing the cultural responsiveness of current and future  
18 staff;

19 (ii) Ensuring all staff, faculty, and school employees are  
20 actively trained in trauma-informed care;

21 (iii) Providing inclusive programming and using a  
22 multidisciplinary approach when serving students experiencing  
23 homelessness and their families;

24 (iv) Intentionally seeking and utilizing input from the families  
25 and students experiencing homelessness about how district policies,  
26 services, and practices can be improved; and

27 (v) Identifying data elements and systems needed to monitor  
28 progress in eliminating disparities in academic outcomes for students  
29 experiencing homelessness with their housed peers.

30 (3) At the end of each academic year, districts receiving grants  
31 ((must measure during the academic year how often each student  
32 physically moves, what services families or unaccompanied youth could  
33 access, and whether or not a family or unaccompanied youth received  
34 stable housing by the end of the school year)) shall monitor and  
35 report on the academic outcomes for students served by the grants.  
36 The academic outcomes are those recommended by the office of the  
37 superintendent of public instruction. The office of the  
38 superintendent of public instruction shall review the reports  
39 submitted by the districts and assist school districts in using these

1 data to identify gaps and needs, and develop sustainable strategies  
2 to improve academic outcomes for students experiencing homelessness.

3 (4) Homeless students are defined as students without a fixed,  
4 regular, and adequate nighttime residence as set forth in the federal  
5 McKinney-Vento homeless ((education)) assistance act ((~~P.L. 100-77;~~  
6 ~~101 Stat. 482~~)), 42 U.S.C. Sec. 11431 through 11435.

7 (5) School districts may not use funds allocated under this  
8 section to supplant existing federal, state, or local resources for  
9 homeless student supports, which may include education liaisons.

10 (6) Grants awarded to districts under this section shall be for  
11 two years.

12 **Sec. 2.** RCW 43.185C.340 and 2016 c 157 s 3 are each amended to  
13 read as follows:

14 (1) Subject to funds appropriated for this specific purpose, the  
15 department(~~(, in consultation with the office of the superintendent~~  
16 ~~of public instruction,)) shall administer a grant program that links  
17 homeless students and their families with stable housing located in  
18 the homeless student's school district. The goals of the program  
19 ~~((is))~~ are to:~~

20 (a) Provide educational stability for homeless students by  
21 promoting housing stability; and

22 (b) Encourage the development of collaborative strategies between  
23 housing and education partners.

24 (2) To ensure that innovative strategies between housing and  
25 education partners are developed and implemented, the department may  
26 contract and consult with a designated vendor to provide technical  
27 assistance and program evaluation, and assist with making grant  
28 awards. If the department contracts with a vendor, the vendor must be  
29 selected by the director and:

30 (a) Be a nonprofit vendor;

31 (b) Be located in Washington state; and

32 (c) Have a demonstrated record of working toward the housing and  
33 educational stability of students and families experiencing  
34 homelessness.

35 (3) In implementing the program, the department, or the  
36 department in partnership with its designated vendor, shall consult  
37 with the office of the superintendent of public instruction.

38 (4) The department, ((working with the office of the  
39 superintendent of public instruction)) or the designated vendor in

1 consultation with the department, shall develop a competitive grant  
2 process to make grant awards (~~(of no more than one hundred thousand~~  
3 ~~dollars per school, not to exceed five hundred thousand dollars per~~  
4 ~~school district,~~) to (~~(school districts partnered with)~~) eligible  
5 organizations on implementation of the proposal. For the purposes of  
6 this subsection, "eligible organization" means any local government,  
7 local housing authority, regional support network established under  
8 chapter 71.24 RCW, behavioral health organization, nonprofit  
9 community or neighborhood-based organization, federally recognized  
10 Indian tribe in the state of Washington, or regional or statewide  
11 nonprofit housing assistance organization. Applications for the grant  
12 program must include (~~(contractual agreements)~~) a memorandum of  
13 understanding between the housing providers and school districts  
14 defining the responsibilities and commitments of each party to  
15 identify, house, and support homeless students. The memorandum must  
16 include:

17 (a) How housing providers will partner with school districts to  
18 address gaps and needs and develop sustainable strategies to help  
19 students experiencing homelessness; and

20 (b) How data on homeless students and their families will be  
21 collected and shared in accordance with privacy protections under  
22 applicable federal and state laws.

23 (~~((3) The grants awarded to school districts shall not exceed~~  
24 ~~fifteen school districts per school year.)) (5) In determining which  
25 (~~(partnerships)~~) eligible organizations will receive grants,  
26 (~~(preference must)~~) the department must ensure that selected grantees  
27 reflect geographic diversity across the state. Greater weight shall  
28 be given to (~~(districts with a demonstrated commitment of partnership~~  
29 and ~~history with)~~ eligible organizations that demonstrate a  
30 commitment to:~~

31 (a) Partnering with local schools or school districts; and

32 (b) Developing and implementing strategies to address racial  
33 inequities. Specific strategies may include, but are not limited to:

34 (i) Hiring direct service staff who reflect the racial, cultural,  
35 and language demographics of the population being served;

36 (ii) Committing to inclusive programming by intentionally seeking  
37 and utilizing input from the population being served;

38 (iii) Ensuring eligibility criteria does not unintentionally  
39 screen out people of color and further racial inequity; and

1 (iv) Creating access points in locations frequented by parents,  
2 guardians, and unaccompanied homeless youth of color.

3 ~~((4))~~ (6) Activities eligible for assistance under this grant  
4 program include but are not limited to:

5 (a) Rental assistance, which includes utilities, security and  
6 utility deposits, first and last month's rent, rental application  
7 fees, moving expenses, and other eligible expenses to be determined  
8 by the department;

9 (b) Transportation assistance, including gasoline assistance for  
10 families with vehicles and bus passes;

11 (c) Emergency shelter; ~~(and)~~

12 (d) Housing stability case management; and

13 (e) Other collaborative housing strategies, including prevention  
14 and strength-based safety and housing approaches.

15 ~~((5))~~ (7)(a) All beneficiaries of funds from the grant program  
16 must be ~~((unaccompanied youth or))~~ from ~~((very low income))~~  
17 households ~~((For the purposes of this subsection, "very low-income~~  
18 household" means an unaccompanied youth or family or unrelated  
19 persons living together whose adjusted income is less than fifty  
20 percent of the median family income, adjusted for household size, for  
21 the county where the grant recipient is located)) that include at  
22 least one homeless student as defined as a child or youth without a  
23 fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence as set forth in the  
24 federal McKinney-Vento homeless assistance act, 42 U.S.C. Sec. 11431  
25 through 11435.

26 (b) For the purposes of this section, "homeless student" includes  
27 unaccompanied homeless youth not in the physical custody of a parent  
28 or guardian. "Unaccompanied homeless youth" includes students up to  
29 the age of twenty-one, in alignment with the qualifications for  
30 school admissions under RCW 28A.225.160(1).

31 ~~((6))~~ (8)(a) Grantee ~~((school districts))~~ organizations must  
32 compile and report information to the department. The department  
33 shall report to the legislature the findings of the grantee, the  
34 housing stability of the homeless families, ~~((the academic~~  
35 performance of the grantee population,)) and any related policy  
36 recommendations.

37 (b) Grantees must track and report on the following measures  
38 including, but not limited to:

39 (i) Length of time enrolled in the grant program;

40 (ii) Housing destination at program exit;

1 (iii) Type of residence prior to enrollment in the grant program;

2 and

3 (iv) Number of times homeless in the past three years.

4 (c) Grantees must also include in their reports a narrative  
5 description discussing its partnership with school districts as set  
6 forth in the memorandum outlined in subsection (4) of this section.  
7 Reports must also include the kinds of supports grantees are  
8 providing students and families to support academic learning.

9 (d) Data on all program participants must be entered into and  
10 tracked through the Washington homeless client management information  
11 system as described in RCW 43.185C.180.

12 ~~((7))~~ (9) In order to ensure that ((school districts)) housing  
13 providers are meeting the requirements of ((an approved)) the grant  
14 program for homeless students, the ((office of the superintendent of  
15 public instruction)) department, or the department in partnership  
16 with its designee, shall monitor the program((s)) at least once every  
17 two years. ((Monitoring shall begin during the 2016-17 school year.

18 ~~(8))~~ (10) Any program review and monitoring under this section  
19 may be conducted concurrently with other program reviews and  
20 monitoring conducted by the department. In its review, the ((office  
21 of the superintendent of public instruction)) department, or the  
22 department in partnership with its designee, shall monitor program  
23 components that include ((but need not be limited to)) the process  
24 used by the ((district)) eligible organization to identify and reach  
25 out to homeless students, ((assessment data)) and other indicators to  
26 determine how well the ((district)) eligible organization is meeting  
27 the ((academic)) housing needs of homeless students((, district  
28 expenditures used to expand opportunities for these students, and the  
29 academic progress of students under)). The department, or the  
30 department in partnership with its designee, shall provide technical  
31 assistance and support to housing providers to better implement the  
32 program.

33 **Sec. 3.** RCW 28A.320.142 and 2016 c 157 s 5 are each amended to  
34 read as follows:

35 (1) Each ((school district that has identified more than ten  
36 unaccompanied youth)) K-12 public school in the state must establish  
37 a building point of contact in each elementary school, middle school,  
38 and high school. These points of contact must be appointed by the  
39 principal of the designated school and are responsible for

1 identifying homeless and unaccompanied homeless youth and connecting  
2 them with the school district's homeless student liaison. The school  
3 district homeless student liaison is responsible for training  
4 building points of contact.

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

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