

SB 265 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Human Services

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Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 3/8, 4/12

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires Department of Human Services (DHS) to conduct monthly, in-person visits with child or ward in substitute care, including review of academic status and supports. Directs DHS to conduct exit interview with child or ward prior to removing from substitute care placement. Requires DHS to ensure school placement of child or ward is not more restrictive setting than resident school district nor in self-contained classroom. Requires DHS to allow child or ward opportunity to create facilitated person centered plan before leaving substitute care.

FISCAL: May Have Fiscal Impact, But No Statement Yet Issued

REVENUE: May Have Revenue Impact, But No Statement Yet Issued

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Foster youth safety and all around “well-being,” planning for the youth’s future
- Foster youth and academic monitoring and success
- Current practices for monthly DHS in-person meetings and capacity for additional DHS responsibilities
- Evaluation of substitute care placements
- Possible amendments

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

When a child is taken into the custody of the Department of Human Services (DHS) that child is often placed in a substitute care placement, such as foster care. DHS administrative rules require monthly, in-person meetings between a child or ward and appropriate DHS staff to review the child’s overall case plan and primarily focus on the safety and well-being of the child. DHS is also the entity primarily responsible for enrolling a foster child in an appropriate educational program, and a preference for the child’s previous school setting is built into DHS rules.

Senate Bill 265 requires DHS to conduct monthly, in-person visits with a child or ward in substitute care placement that include updates on the child’s academic status and progress and ensure needed supports are in place. It also directs DHS to conduct an exit interview before removing a child from substitute care to review the child’s perception of safety, quality of life, and quality of care at the placement. The measure requires DHS to ensure that a child or ward is not placed in an educational setting that is more restrictive than their resident school district, nor that they are placed in a self-contained classroom with only other substitute care children. Finally, Senate Bill 265 requires DHS to offer a child or ward age 16 or older an opportunity, prior to leaving substitute care, to create a facilitated person centered plan to supplement the child’s case plan and establish the child’s life goals.