

What does the Homeless Student Stability and Opportunity Gap Act do?

Significant statement on homeless students.

The legislature found that schools are “vitally necessary” for homeless students who “often struggle in school because they are worried about where their families are staying night after night.” It also found that the “population of homeless students disproportionately includes students of color.”

Grants to schools to identify and serve more homeless students.

Creates a “competitive grant process to evaluate and award state-funded grants to school districts to increase identification of homeless students and the capacity of the districts to provide support.”

Grants for school-housing partnerships.

Creates a “grant program that links homeless students and their families with stable housing located in the homeless student's school district. The goal of the program is to provide educational stability for homeless students by promoting housing stability.” Allowable expenses include: (a) rental assistance; (b) transportation assistance; (c) emergency shelter; and (d) housing stability case management.

Requires data on unaccompanied youth and disproportionality.

OSPI must now break out two populations in its homeless student population: identified unaccompanied homeless students (by district), and identified homeless students of color.

Requires staff in middle and high schools focused on unaccompanied youth.

Every school with more than 10 unaccompanied youth must establish a building point of contact in each middle school and high school. These points of contact are responsible for identifying homeless and unaccompanied youth and connecting them with the school district's homeless student liaison.

Allows unaccompanied youth to access preventative health care.

Unaccompanied homeless students are now able to receive nonemergency outpatient primary care services through the informed consent of a school nurse, school counselor, or homeless student liaison.