Postsecondary Education Subcommittee Report to the Workgroup 7/23/11

The Postsecondary Education Subcommittee has held one conference call since the last Workgroup meeting.

A.   The subcommittee has come to a consensus on three items.

1. Members of the subcommittee agree that the adult child must be enrolled in an accredited academic or vocational on a Fulltime, per term basis.
2. Section (3) should state that if it is determined at the end of the term that the adult child is not meeting the requirements set forth, PSES will be automatically suspended.
3. If support is suspended for any reason, the suspension should be re-established at the end of the next quarter or semester when the transcripts are available. This will be in-line with the guidelines of most of the educational facilities in Washington.

B.   Members present at the last subcommittee would like workgroup to consider the following:

1. In the event that support for postsecondary educational expenses shall be suspended for a second time, either parent may make a motion to the Court asking that the payer's obligation for support for postsecondary educational expenses shall terminate. In considering the payer's motion, the court shall determine the reason for the second suspension, and shall take into account such factors as the child's injury or illness and failure of the educational facility to provide opportunity for the child to maintain eligibility.

2. One member has a concern that paying the parent with whom the child resides could cause litigation problems later. One concern is if the adult child has a conflict, or moves out of that parent's home and moves with a friend or with the paying parent. He feels that this is a "Court Order" and therefore, the parent paying is obligated to keep paying the other parent until they go back to court.

- Members feel strongly that this is a learning experience and that the adult child should be learning that you may not have a place to stay if you don't pay your bills.

3. Members of the subcommittee present agree that parents, whom are trying to be diligent and pay ahead of time, should not be punished.

- Any pre-funding from savings, college funds, etc. shall be deducted from that parent's share and postsecondary support shall be treated in the same manner as it would if funding were provided on a monthly basis with regard to minor children. (Ex. Dad saves money for children's college and pays the school directly for tuition and books for the whole year. Dad

should be able to deduct the amount paid from his portion of PSES. If there are other minor children then the dicta of Daubert should apply and the child should still be included when determining child support for the other children.)

4. Tuition should not exceed costs of an in-state college.

- Members feel that it would be easier for parents to predict the costs of an in-state public college.

- One member feels that since the parents are being required to fund some or all of the education that we must make it as affordable as we can.

5. Members of the subcommittee present feel that the adult child should contribute in some way to their own education and at least all financial aid should be deducted from the education costs before considering the parents' share.

C.   Items from the last workgroup meeting not addressed above:

1. There was a question on how GET or Section 529 account or other pre-paid college accounts work if a child fails or doesn't attend school.
- This issue was not discussed in our meetings as there was not enough time. However, one member found that if a child decides not to attend school that GET or a Section 529 account are a type of saving account that can be refunded to the parent or re-allocated for another student. If a child attends an educational facility beyond the allowed drop-out date, there are no refunds. Most educational facilities have an allotted time frame to drop classes and receive a full or partial refund for the dropped classes.

- In any event, some of the suggestions above would cover this issue.