
Education Committee

HB 3145

Brief Description: Creating a pilot project in civics education.

Sponsors: Representatives P. Sullivan, Nixon, Hunt, Wood, Fromhold, Crouse, Grant, Condotta, Kessler, Kretz, Buri, Serben, Flannigan, Kristiansen, Ahern, Armstrong, Sump, Talcott, McDonald, Upthegrove, Tom, Quall, Darneille, Anderson, Woods, Schual-Berke, Bailey, Rodne, Morrell, Appleton, Kilmer, Green, Roberts, Sells, Kagi, Hudgins, Santos and Kenney.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates a civics instruction pilot program in no more than fifteen counties.
- Requires the creation of a civics curriculum and guide to be used in the pilot program.

Hearing Date: 2/15/06

Staff: Sarah Ream (786-7303).

Background:

The Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) must develop Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs) that are in line with the goals of the Basic Education Act. Included among these goals is the goal of giving students opportunities to develop knowledge and skills essential to know and apply core concepts and principals of civics.

Regulations issued by the State Board of Education include civics as part of social studies. Students in elementary, middle, and high school are required to learn the state's EALRs in social studies. By the 2008-09 school year, school districts must have assessments or strategies to ensure their students are learning the EALRs in social studies.

Other civics-related requirements for Washington public schools include: (1) studying the state and federal Constitutions before graduating from high school; (2) having a flag exercise at the start of the school day; (3) observing Temperance and Good Citizenship Day; and (4) providing educational activities in observance of Veteran's Day.

Summary of Bill:

The SPI is directed to work with selected county auditors' offices to develop, as a pilot program, an interactive high school civics curriculum. A maximum of fifteen counties may be selected to participate in the pilot.

The civics curriculum used in the pilot must include instruction regarding (1) local government organization, (2) ballot measures, initiatives, and referenda, (3) the role of precincts, (4) roles and responsibilities of tax jurisdictions in establishing ballot measures, and (5) the work of conducting elections. Other activities include conducting mock elections, preparing advisories on issues, and when possible having school election results posted on the county's election web site. A curriculum guide will be developed that incorporates ideas from other Washington civics education programs.

Participating high school students will be selected to assist their counties with managing their internet election reporting system.

Appropriation: \$200,000 for each of Fiscal Year, 2007 and 2008 is appropriated from the general fund to the State Auditor to be made available to counties participating in the pilot program.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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