
SENATE BILL 5938

State of Washington

59th Legislature

2005 Regular Session

By Senators Rasmussen, Schmidt, McAuliffe, Berkey, Jacobsen, Kohl-Welles, Regala and Shin

Read first time 02/15/2005. Referred to Committee on Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to equitable opportunity for all; creating new
2 sections; and providing an expiration date.

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

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that the primary
5 goal underlying state and federal academic accountability systems is to
6 ensure all children are provided with an equal opportunity to obtain a
7 high-quality education. The legislature also finds that federal
8 accountability under the no child left behind act of 2001 is measured
9 by adequate yearly progress toward specified goals as demonstrated by
10 the number of students who meet or exceed the standard on the
11 Washington assessment of student learning. The legislature further
12 finds that failure to make adequate yearly progress is most apparent
13 with students of color and students from low-income households.

14 (2) The legislature recognizes that research from the office of the
15 superintendent of public instruction concludes that low-income and
16 minority students encounter fewer opportunities to learn, inadequate
17 instruction and support, and lower expectations from their schools and
18 teachers, and that schools are not sufficiently inclusive of all
19 cultures represented in the state's public schools. The legislature

1 also recognizes that the multiethnic think tank coordinated within the
2 office of the superintendent of public instruction has identified five
3 factors contributing to inequitable education: (a) The existing
4 cultural paradigm; (b) the biases of the testing instruments; (c)
5 socioeconomic disparities; (d) postsecondary education and work force
6 ramifications; and (e) insufficient data collection and reporting.

7 (3) The legislature further recognizes that the national
8 association of state boards of education reports that: (a)
9 Disproportionate numbers of students of color are placed in special
10 education and other lower-track programs; (b) students of color get a
11 lower-level curriculum; (c) most students do not receive a full
12 curriculum that presents a complete picture of diverse contributions to
13 the American way of life; (d) diverse learning styles are not addressed
14 in many schools; and (e) many schools do not encourage students to
15 engage in cultural inquiry based on shared values.

16 (4) The legislature finds that the academic achievement gap is the
17 result of many factors, including poverty, educational opportunity of
18 parents, recent immigration, family mobility, societal and
19 institutional bias, and the fact that English is not the primary
20 language in many homes. The legislature finds that in order to close
21 the achievement gap, the educational system will need to change how it
22 approaches learning and teaching through a greater understanding of the
23 impact of language, culture, race, and poverty on student achievement.
24 The legislature declares that closing the achievement gap will require
25 a comprehensive and coordinated approach designed to: (a) Create more
26 learning environments that are intolerant of racism and exclusion and
27 in which high expectations are held for all students; (b) develop
28 curricula and teaching practices that recognize the differences in
29 ethnicity, language, and culture; and (c) require that teacher training
30 and professional development programs include opportunities to learn
31 cultural responsiveness skills and effective instructional strategies
32 that are successful in raising the academic achievement of
33 traditionally underachieving students.

34 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The joint select committee on equitable
35 opportunity for all is created. The committee shall consist of two
36 members of each major caucus of the senate, representing the committees
37 on early learning, K-12 and higher education and on human services and

1 corrections, appointed by the president of the senate; and two members
2 of each major caucus of the house of representatives, representing the
3 committees on education and on juvenile justice and family law,
4 appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives. Every effort
5 shall be made to ensure that members of the joint select committee are
6 appointed by the effective date of this section.

7 (2) The joint select committee shall consult with the communities
8 of color stakeholders, the multiethnic think tank, the special
9 education coalition, and the Washington state association on
10 multicultural education, and may form one or more advisory committees
11 that may include, but need not be limited to, representation from the
12 Washington state commissions on African-American affairs, Asian Pacific
13 American affairs, and Hispanic affairs, and the governor's office of
14 Indian affairs. The committee shall determine what efforts, if any,
15 currently exist to implement the following action steps:

16 (a) Add a fifth Washington learning goal to ensure culturally
17 competent education;

18 (b) Infuse multicultural education goals into the existing four
19 Washington state learning goals;

20 (c) Integrate multicultural and technological learning objectives
21 in the Washington state essential academic learning requirements;

22 (d) Standardize the data collection, categorization, and reporting
23 of all ethnic groups, including the disaggregation of data sets into
24 discrete ethnic populations that provide the most accurate information
25 about student achievement;

26 (e) Recruit and retain racial and ethnic minority staff and
27 administration; and

28 (f) Require that professional development is culturally and
29 linguistically responsive for all staff, administration, and others.

30 (3) The joint select committee shall consult with the communities
31 of color stakeholders, the multiethnic think tank, the special
32 education coalition, and the Washington state association on
33 multicultural education, and may form one or more advisory committees
34 that may include, but need not be limited to, representation from the
35 Washington state commissions on African-American affairs, Asian Pacific
36 American affairs, and Hispanic affairs, and the governor's office of
37 Indian affairs.

1 (4) The joint select committee shall report its findings and
2 recommendations, including a reasonable timeline for implementation
3 that is prioritized based on existing efforts already under way and the
4 resources necessary to fully implement the action item, by September 1,
5 2006, to the senate committee on early learning, K-12 and higher
6 education and the house of representatives committee on education. The
7 report shall include a determination of the actions and resources
8 necessary to complete the action steps in this section, including
9 whether existing basic education moneys can be used and the amount of
10 additional funding needed.

11 (5) The joint select committee shall receive staffing support from
12 senate committee services and the office of program research.

13 (6) Legislative members of the joint select committee shall receive
14 per diem and travel under RCW 44.04.120.

15 (7) This section expires April 1, 2007.

--- END ---