

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 3317

As Reported by House Committee On:
Education

Title: An act relating to revising the timelines and process for approving the mathematics and science standards and curriculum.

Brief Description: Regarding standards and curriculum in mathematics and science.

Sponsors: Representatives Hunter, Anderson, McIntire and Santos.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/5/08 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- States legislative intent to amend the timelines and process for revising standards and identifying recommended curricula in mathematics and science.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Quall, Chair; Barlow, Vice Chair; Priest, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Haigh, Liias, Roach, Santos and Sullivan.

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

Legislation enacted in 2007 directs the State Board of Education (SBE) and the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to revise the state academic learning standards in mathematics and science and to identify three recommended curricula in mathematics and science. The following timelines and process are specified:

- The SBE recommends revisions to the standards based on a set of review criteria. The SBE engages national consultants and creates citizen advisory panels to assist with this work. The recommended revisions in mathematics were due September 30, 2007, and the recommended revisions in science are due June 30, 2008.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

- The SPI revises the standards based on the recommendations and presents them to the Legislature. The mathematics standards were presented January 31, 2008, and the science standards are due December 1, 2008. The revised mathematics standards take effect unless the 2008 Legislature directs otherwise. The 2009 Legislature will have an opportunity to act on the revised science standards.
- The SPI presents recommendations to the SBE for three recommended curricula each for elementary, middle, and high school grades. The SBE provides official comment, and then the SPI makes any changes before adopting the curricula. The SPI recommendations for mathematics curricula are due May 15, 2008, with comment back from the SBE by June 30, 2008. The SPI recommendations for science curricula are due May 15, 2009, with comment back from the SBE by June 30, 2009.

Summary of Bill:

The Legislature intends to amend the timelines and process for revising state learning standards in mathematics and science and identifying the recommended curricula that align with those standards.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The legislation directing revision of the math and science standards may have had an unrealistic timeline. It would be better to react thoughtfully to changes in the standards and take additional time to do an adequate job of reviewing the proposals than to force acceptance of a draft that isn't quite finished. Because the Legislature has its own deadlines, this bill is a vehicle for allowing whatever changes to the timeline and process of the math and science standards seem to be appropriate. The OSPI has made a good effort with limited time. The latest draft is better than the first one, but it would be worth the time to step back and allow teachers to review these standards. Further refinement may be necessary. Meanwhile, school districts are in a holding pattern waiting to buy curriculum.

(Opposed) The objections to the revised standards, while motivated by genuine concerns, are not well thought out. Someone ran for a local school board based solely on the platform that calculators not be used through 8th grade. This would effectively remove from instruction the Pythagorean theorem and the theory of compound interest. Doing these calculations by hand would be a waste of valuable instruction time. People who object to the standards typically want to go back to a way of instruction from the 1950s and 60s, which is to explain a math

concept and do problems until the theory is well grounded. Today's instructors are trying to think about math problems in a real world context. The revised standards are not perfect. But people who have looked at them see improvements in emphasis on computational fluency. There is no reason for further delay.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Hunter, prime sponsor; and Rich Semler, Richland School District.

(Opposed) Bill Marsh.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.