

HOUSE BILL REPORT

E2SSB 5528

As Reported by House Committee On:
Education

Title: An act relating to mathematics education.

Brief Description: Requiring a revision of essential academic learning requirements and grade level expectations for mathematics.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Pflug, Holmquist, Zarelli, Swecker, Clements, Stevens, Roach, Hewitt, Delvin and Parlette).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 3/20/07, 3/29/07 [DP].

Brief Summary of Engrossed Second Substitute Bill

- Requires the State Board of Education (SBE) to recommend revisions to the state mathematics standards by September 2007, which the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) must adopt and present to the Legislature for review by January 2008.
- Requires the SPI to present three recommended mathematics curricula to the SBE by May 2008, which the SBE will review before they are adopted by the SPI.
- Creates a Mathematics Advisory Panel of citizens appointed by the leadership of the House of Representatives and the Senate based on nominations from each caucus.

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, McDermott, Roach, Santos and P. Sullivan.

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

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.

Background:

In 1993, the Legislature directed the Commission on Student Learning (Commission) to develop the Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs), which describe what students should know and be able to do in eight content areas, including mathematics. The EALRs in mathematics were initially adopted in 1995 and revised in 1997. The Commission also established performance benchmarks in the content areas at grades four, seven, and ten. The Commission completed its work in 1999 and was then dissolved. Current law requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to periodically review the EALRs.

In 2002, the SPI began development of Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) for grades kindergarten through 10. The SPI released a refined version of the mathematics GLEs in September 2006.

As part of a Joint Mathematics Action Plan adopted in December 2006, the State Board of Education (SBE) has issued a Request for Proposals for a national consultant to conduct a review of the mathematics EALRs to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the current standards. The consultant will also recommend an appropriate methodology to benchmark Washington's mathematics performance to international standards. The SBE is also seeking interested individuals, including mathematics teachers, faculty, K-12 curriculum directors and administrators, parents, and business and community leaders, to serve on a panel that will assist the consultant.

Summary of Bill:

By September 2007, the SBE will recommend to the SPI revised EALRs and GLEs in mathematics. The recommendations will consider clarity, rigor, and coherence of standards; study of national and international standards and those in other states; and information presented during public comment. By January 2008, the SPI must revise the EALRs and GLEs and present them to the SBE and the legislative education committees. The SPI must adopt the revisions unless otherwise advised by the Legislature in the 2008 session.

The SBE will be aided by an expert consultant retained by the SBE and a Mathematics Advisory Panel (Panel). The Panel is appointed by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives from a list of names submitted by each of the four caucuses. The Panel must have representatives from academia, business, and industry; educators in mathematics or science-related fields; parents; and at most two additional persons with specialized experience. The panelists must have no conflicts of interests and are compensated and reimbursed for travel expenses. School districts must be reimbursed for the cost of substitutes for the educators on the Panel. Panel members employed by public institutions of higher education must be provided time away from regular duties without loss of benefits and privileges.

By May 2008, the SPI must present to the SBE no more than three mathematics curricula with appropriate diagnostic and supplemental materials for elementary, middle, and high school

grade spans that align with the revised EALRs and GLEs. The SBE must provide official comments to the SPI on the recommended mathematics curricula by June 2008, and the SPI must seek advice on the curricula from the Panel. Subject to appropriations and availability, at least one of the curricula in each grade span must be available to schools and parents on-line at no cost to the school or parent.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The most important aspect of the bill is the independent review panel, which is recommended by math reform advocates and constituents who are concerned about the revision of the mathematics standards. There are concerns that this review is moving ahead without an opportunity to guide it. Math and science are the Parent Teacher Association's second highest priority. Independent panels and reviews are needed. The panels must be balanced. The SBE should not pick their own advisory committee. It is too likely that they will get the answers they want, and those are not likely to be the right answers. These are very contentious issues. Curriculum is the key point of contact with students. A good curriculum based on strong standards can help make up for weaker teaching skills, especially in the short term.

(Concerns) The SBE has already selected a national consultant and is seeking names of citizens to serve on an advisory panel. Many of the review criteria in the bill are reflected in the consultant request for proposal. The SBE is committed to public hearings and a public process. But faster results are needed. The SBE's desire is to have a product by August 2007. There is compromise language in another bill to address the SBE's concerns and many aspects are similar to this bill. The bottom line is that the issues raised about the state's mathematics standards must be addressed.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Senator Pflug, prime sponsor; Julie Wright, Washington State Parent Teacher Association; and David Myerson, Where's the Math.

(Concerns) Edie Harding, State Board of Education; and Judy Hartmann, Governor's Office.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.