

SENATE BILL REPORT

2SHB 2722

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Early Learning & K-12 Education, February 25, 2008
Ways & Means, March 03, 2008

Title: An act relating to addressing the achievement gap for African- American students.

Brief Description: Creating an advisory committee to address the achievement gap for African-American students.

Sponsors: House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Pettigrew, Kenney, Morris, Sullivan, Hasegawa, Upthegrove, Loomis, Pedersen, Darneille, Conway, Hudgins, Quall, Ericks, Kagi and Ormsby).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/13/08, 97-0.

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/21/08, 2/25/08 [DP-WM].
Ways & Means: 3/3/08 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Tom, Vice Chair; King, Ranking Minority Member; Brandland, Eide, Hobbs, Holmquist, Kauffman, McDermott, Oemig, Rasmussen, Weinstein and Zarelli.

Staff: Susan Mielke (786-7422)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Prentice, Chair; Fraser, Vice Chair, Capital Budget Chair; Pridemore, Vice Chair, Operating Budget; Zarelli, Ranking Minority Member; Brandland, Carrell, Fairley, Hatfield, Hobbs, Honeyford, Keiser, Kohl-Welles, Parlette, Rasmussen, Regala, Roach, Rockefeller, Schoesler and Tom.

Staff: Bryon Moore (786-7726)

Background: The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), reports that there are 73,075 students statewide in the class of 2008. Of those 73,075 students, 61 percent have met the state standard on all three of the content areas of the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL), 24 percent have met the state standard on two of the three content

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areas, 6.6 percent have met the state standard on only one of the three content areas, and 8.2 percent have failed to meet the state standard on any of the three content areas.

However, there is disproportionate levels of achievement by subgroups on the WASL. For example, of the 3,279 African-American students in the class of 2008, only 33 percent have met the state standard on all three content areas of the WASL, 39 percent have met the state standard on two of the three content areas, 12.7 percent have met the state standard on only one of the three content areas, and 14.5 percent have failed to meet the state standard on any of the three content areas. In 2006 the Black Education Strategy Roundtable (Roundtable), an informal advisory group convened by the Washington Commission on African American Affairs, convened community forums and developed a set of recommendations for education policy makers which included: (1) a statewide strategic plan to close the racial opportunity and achievement gap; (2) a public-private partnership to fund and operate local family engagement and empowerment activities and capacity building institutes for families; (3) a public-private partnership for additional community-based supplemental education for Black youth; and (4) a funding and policy package to increase school funding and fundamentally redesign the school day, curriculum, and instructional practices to meet the needs and learning styles of students not meeting state standards.

The Center for the Improvement of Student Learning (CISL) is located within OSPI, is was established to serve as a clearinghouse for information, promising practices, and research that promotes and supports effective learning environments for all students, especially those in underserved communities. Additionally, the CISL is to promote and facilitate family, school, and community partnerships around the state.

Summary of Bill: The CISL must convene an advisory committee to craft a strategic plan to address the achievement gap for African-American students. The advisory committee is comprised of 15 members, including educators, parents, and representatives of community-based organizations, the Washington Commission on African-American Affairs, and the Office of the Education Ombudsman. Five members each are appointed by the Speaker of the House, the Secretary of the Senate, and the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI). The advisory committee is to conduct a detailed analysis of the achievement gap for African-American students; examine the extent that current initiatives address the needs of African-American students; identify best practices and promising programs; develop a comprehensive plan with school and community-based strategies, including implementing the suggestions of the Black Education Strategy Roundtable; and develop performance improvement measures and benchmarks to monitor progress. The Washington State Institute for Public Policy must assist the advisory committee in examining detailed data on achievement indicators and trends. A final report is due December 1, 2008, to the SPI, the Governor, the State Board of Education, the P-20 Council, and the education committees of the Legislature. Beginning in January 2010, the CISL must annually report on the implementation of strategies to address the achievement gap for African-American students and on the progress of improvement of education performance measures for African-American students.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Second Substitute Bill (Early Learning & K-12 Education): PRO: All of our children are not achieving at the same level in our education system. African-American students are at the center of the achievement gap. This bill enables the community to lead a strategic-plan effort to narrow that gap. There are critical issues that need to be addressed in our education system to narrow the gap and broader-based issues unique to our African-American children and the communities that support them. We need the Legislature to join with the African-American community to make a new and specific commitment to our African-American children to send a message to and support our community to ensure that our children are successful. While there are a lot of ideas about what will help our children, this bill requires data analysis and a plan that will help us sort out community solutions that work for our students. We need to invest resources to target this population, give greater assistance to teachers who want all of their students to achieve, and benefit our entire state by decreasing the number of African-American students who drop out of school and increasing the number who graduate with sufficient skills to be successful citizens in our state.

Persons Testifying (Early Learning & K-12 Education): PRO: Representative Eric Pettigrew, prime sponsor; Senator Rosa Franklin; Dr. Terry Bergeson, Superintendent of Public Instruction; Mona H. Bailey, Black Education Strategy Roundtable; Eric Shinfeld, Prosperity Partnership; Sheley Secret, NAACP; Lee Nugent, Seattle Building and Construction Trades Council; Andrew Griffin, OSPI; Greg Pierce, Washington Roundtable; Brielle Erickson, 1st Legislative District Youth Council; Alicia Endersen, 1st Legislative District Youth Council; Melissa Dahl, 1st Legislative District Youth Council; Grover Johnson, A. Philip Randolph Institute.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Ways & Means): PRO: It is crucial to address the achievement gap for African-American students. The first step is understanding the problem and devising a strategy to solve it.

Persons Testifying (Ways & Means): PRO: Vicki Austin, Black Education Strategy Roundtable.