

SENATE BILL REPORT

EHB 3317

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Early Learning & K-12 Education, February 27, 2008

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

Brief Description: Regarding mathematics standards.

Sponsors: Representatives Hunter, Anderson, McIntire and Santos.

Brief History: Passed House: 2/19/08, 95-0.

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/25/08, 2/27/08 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Tom, Vice Chair; Eide, Hobbs, Kauffman, McDermott, Oemig and Rasmussen.

Staff: Susan Mielke (786-7422)

Background: Under current law, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) has the responsibility to develop and revise the essential academic learning requirements (student learning standards) that identify the knowledge and skills that public school students need to know and be able to do. The learning standards are based upon the student learning goals in statute. If the SPI proposes any modification to the student learning standards, then the SPI must, upon request, provide opportunities for the education committees of the Legislature to review the proposed modifications before the modifications are adopted.

During the 2007 Legislative Session, the Legislature directed the State Board of Education (SBE) to recommend to the SPI revised state learning standards in mathematics and science. The recommendations for the mathematics standards had to be provided to SPI by September 30, 2007. The SPI is required to revise the mathematics standards and grade level expectations by January 31, 2008 and present the revised standards to the SBE and the Legislature. The SPI must adopt the revised standards and grade level expectations unless otherwise directed by the Legislature during the 2008 Legislative Session.

Summary of Bill: The Legislature intends that the revised mathematics standards by the SPI will fortify content and increase rigor; provide greater clarity, specificity, and measurability of what is expected of students; supply more explicit guidance for educators, enhance the relevance of mathematics to students, and ultimately result in more Washington students

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having the opportunity to be successful in mathematics. Additionally, the revised standards should make clear the importance of all aspects of mathematics.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: We support the bill and the Legislature's desire to have the best math standards that we can have. This is a national issue – other states are also looking at their math standards. Washington's work is still on-going and we encourage the decisions not to take place in haste. We support the SBE's consultant's review and recommendations.

CON: I believe that this bill intends to derail our state's math curriculum. The primary sponsors are engaged in the math wars. They are traditionalists and not everyone agrees with them. Some people support reform math, which includes guessing. Teaching in this new way is difficult and requires training for teachers to be able to teach in this progressive manner.

OTHER: We have been involved in revising the mathematics standards and we believe that they are improved and more rigorous. We received feedback from hundreds of teachers across the state, including those who attended the January conference. The revision team, which is from diverse backgrounds, is continuing to work through this week. We believe that we have effectively addressed the concerns of the SBE's consultant.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Elliott Paul, Where's the Math; Laura Bay, Washington State PTA.

CON: William Marsh, Ph.D.

OTHER: George Bright, SPI; David Thielk, parent, teacher from Central Kitsap School District.