
SENATE BILL 6549

State of Washington 60th Legislature 2008 Regular Session

By Senators McAuliffe, Hobbs, Tom, Weinstein, Franklin, Zarelli, Parlette, Jacobsen, and Kohl-Welles

Read first time 01/17/08. Referred to Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to culminating projects in the area of
2 environmental education; adding a new section to chapter 28A.310 RCW;
3 adding a new section to chapter 28A.300 RCW; and creating a new
4 section.

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

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** As a graduation requirement, the culminating
7 project is intended to provide students with a unique opportunity to
8 evidence the totality of their educational experience through an
9 individualized learning experience of their choosing. While the
10 culminating project is intended to show that the student met the
11 essential academic learning standards, it also provides a venue for the
12 student to explore areas of personal interest, develop leadership
13 skills, and understand how the learning standards connect with future
14 career opportunities.

15 The legislature supports the integration of natural science,
16 wildlife, and environmental education programs into the common school
17 curriculum as a way to better engage students and to set the stage for
18 life-long learning. It is the intent of the legislature to strengthen
19 that integration by creating a program that allows students to satisfy

1 the culminating project through participation in high-quality, hands-on
2 environmental or ecological projects that link state academic standards
3 with real-world learning experiences. These projects will begin
4 preparing students to be the next generation of leaders with the
5 skills, knowledge, and dispositions to effectively and creatively
6 address the challenges and opportunities of the twenty-first century.

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.310
8 RCW to read as follows:

9 (1) The sustainable environment culminating project grant program
10 is created to establish an organized regional approach to providing
11 environmentally related culminating projects for students that connect
12 school academics with natural resource career possibilities. Grant
13 funds provided for the purpose of supporting environmentally related
14 culminating projects shall be disbursed through a competitive grant
15 process administered through the educational service districts that
16 receive an appropriation in the budget.

17 (2) Educational service districts receiving funding shall award the
18 grant funds to a nonprofit organization that has proven experience with
19 delivering applied learning opportunities to students in the area of
20 environmental education, including but not limited to areas of interest
21 such as ocean policy, biodiversity, Puget Sound clean-up, environmental
22 restoration, and climate change. Educational service districts may
23 pool grant funds and award a single grant to a single nonprofit
24 organization that will work with individual school districts.

25 (3) The nonprofit grant recipients shall be required to provide
26 assistance to school districts through instructional resources and
27 support, professional development and equipment sharing, and by
28 providing sample curricula and project ideas. The nonprofit
29 organizations shall assist school districts in developing culminating
30 projects for students that:

31 (a) Allow students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in
32 relationship to the essential academic learning standards and to do so
33 through integration of reading, writing, communication, mathematics,
34 science, social studies, the arts, and health/fitness and in a real-
35 world, hands-on context;

36 (b) Provide a forum, both virtual and in-person, that allows
37 students to be involved with and interact with scientists,

1 policymakers, and local community leaders during the development and
2 completion of the culminating project. A community mentoring component
3 shall be included in the program to provide support to students;

4 (c) Promote leadership skills;

5 (d) Are designed to improve student learning and promote a sense of
6 personal responsibility through hands-on, technology-assisted science
7 and community research in the field. The project shall require the
8 student to use scientific protocols to share data and compare findings
9 with others and learn firsthand the impacts that people have on the
10 environment; and

11 (e) Help students learn about responsible stewardship and careers
12 in sustainable design.

13 (4) By December 2009, the nonprofit organizations receiving grants
14 under this section shall report to the educational service districts
15 and the legislature the number of students served by the program, the
16 types and number of culminating projects completed, and the feedback on
17 the program from students, school administrators, and teachers.

18 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.300
19 RCW to read as follows:

20 Subject to the availability of funds, the office of the
21 superintendent of public instruction shall work with the nonprofit
22 grant recipients as provided in section 2 of this act to implement a
23 statewide online project database in which students can find project
24 opportunities through connections with community-based and agency
25 resources and where students can post their own projects and continue
26 or build on the work of other student projects. This database shall be
27 housed and managed by the office of the superintendent of public
28 instruction.

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