

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5973

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Early Learning & K-12 Education, February 25, 2009

Title: An act relating to closing the achievement gap in order to provide all students an excellent and equitable education.

Brief Description: Closing the achievement gap in order to provide all students an excellent and equitable education.

Sponsors: Senators Kauffman, McAuliffe, Oemig, Shin, Hobbs, Kohl-Welles and Kline.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/19/09, 2/25/09 [DPS-WM, DNP, w/oRec].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5973 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Kauffman, Vice Chair, Early Learning; Oemig, Vice Chair, K-12; Hobbs, Jarrett, McDermott and Tom.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators King, Ranking Minority Member; Holmquist.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senators Brandland and Roach.

Staff: Juliana Roe (786-7438)

Background: The 2008 Legislature commissioned five studies, by way of 2SHB 2722 (2008), and four provisos in the 2008 supplemental operating budget, that analyzed the differences in academic achievement and educational outcomes among various subgroups of students. These differences are referred to as the achievement gap. The commissioned studies drew from research, best practices, and personal, professional, and cultural experiences and came up with various recommendations to close the achievement gap.

Summary of Bill: The bill as referred to committee not considered.

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.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Substitute): The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) must disaggregate all student data-related reports by at least the following subgroups of students: White, Black, Hispanic, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, Pacific Islander/Hawaiian Native, low income, transitional bilingual, migrant, special education, and students covered by section 504 of the federal rehabilitation act of 1973.

Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) must convene a working group to identify a list of model standards for cultural competency and make recommendations to the education committees of the Legislature on the strengths and weaknesses of those standards.

OSPI must provide assistance to school districts where data indicates achievement gaps. OSPI must identify the school districts that have the largest achievement gap and those school districts that should receive priority for assistance in advancing cultural competence skills in the workforce. The guidance provided by OSPI must take into consideration the achievement gap recommendations provided to the Legislature.

The Center for Improvement of Student Learning must work in collaboration with the five commissioned achievement gap groups to review the challenges and solutions addressed by the groups to develop a plan for implementation to address the achievement gap. This plan must establish benchmarks. The center must report on the implementation of the plan required by January 2010, and annually report on the status of implementation thereafter.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION COMMITTEE (Recommended Substitute as Passed Committee): Requires PESB to convene a working group to identify a list of model standards for cultural competency and make recommendations to the education committees of the Legislature on the strengths and weaknesses of those standards.

Requires OSPI, rather than PESB, to provide assistance to school districts where data indicates achievement gaps. Requires OSPI to identify the school districts that have the largest achievement gap and those school districts that should receive priority for assistance in advancing cultural competence skills in the workforce. The guidance provided by OSPI must take into consideration the achievement gap recommendations provided to the Legislature.

Requires the Center for Improvement of Student Learning to work in collaboration with the five commissioned achievement gap groups to review the challenges and solutions addressed by the groups to develop a plan for implementation to address the achievement gap. Requires the plan to establish benchmarks. Requires the center to report on the implementation of the plan required by January 2010, and annually report on the status of implementation thereafter.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 11, 2009.

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 Proposed Substitute as Heard in Committee:

PRO: This bill is a result of many hours of hard work. It reflects meaningful steps that we hope to move forward this session. It remains a work in progress. But the intent of the bill is to work toward bridging the achievement gaps. One important goal is to disaggregate all of the data that is currently collected. We also want to continue the workgroup that has been established.

It is no secret that Washington State is facing a difficult economic climate, but there is not shortage of will. There is a will to move forward and effectively and efficiently address the achievement gap. It is important to continue the momentum of the work that was conducted this summer.

There is still support for the original version of the bill.

OSPI might be a better place to work on the achievement gap because OSPI has already been doing work in this area.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Kauffman, prime sponsor; Vicki Austin, Mona Bailey, Black Education Strategy Roundtable; Sam Chandler, OSPI; Brad Burnham, Washington State Board of Education; Christie Perkins, Washington State Special Education Coalition.