

SENATE BILL REPORT

2SSB 5973

As Passed Senate, March 9, 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 K-12 schools.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by 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].

Ways & Means: 2/27/09, 3/02/09 [DP2S, DNP, w/oRec].

Passed Senate: 3/09/09, 30-18.

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)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 5973 be substituted therefor, and the second substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Prentice, Chair; Fraser, Vice Chair, Capital Budget Chair; Tom, Vice Chair, Operating Budget; Hobbs, Keiser, Kline, Kohl-Welles, McDermott, Murray, Oemig, Pridemore and Rockefeller.

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.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senator Zarelli, Ranking Minority Member.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senators Brandland, Carrell, Parlette and Schoesler.

Staff: Elise Greef (786-7708)

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 Second Substitute Bill: 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.

The bill is null and void if funding is not provided in the 2009-11 omnibus operating budget.

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 (Early Learning & K-12 Education): 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 (Early Learning & K-12 Education): 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.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Ways & Means): PRO: This bill represents an effort to continue the momentum of the five groups that studied the achievement gap over the last year. It is very important to continue the implementation of those recommendations, which will have the effect of closing that gap. We would ask that you look closely at the language that has resulted from the work we have been doing with OSPI and the House. By working closely together, we have reduced the fiscal impact to about \$60,000 – most of which are within current resources. We look forward to working with you on a bill that will make progress toward closing the achievement gap.

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