

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6798

As of February 3, 2010

Title: An act relating to implementing recommendations of the achievement gap oversight and accountability committee.

Brief Description: Implementing the recommendations of the achievement gap oversight and accountability committee.

Sponsors: Senators Kauffman, Franklin, McAuliffe, Hobbs, Marr, Prentice, Eide, Shin and Kline.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/03/10.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

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 often referred to as the achievement gap. In 2009 the Legislature created the Achievement Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee (Committee), by way of 2SSB 5973, to synthesize findings and recommendations from the 2008 studies into an implementation plan, and recommend policies and strategies in specified areas to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB), and the State Board of Education to close the achievement gap. The Committee has since provided the Legislature with a list of recommendations as to how to close the achievement gap.

Under RCW 28A.410.260, PESB in consultation with the Committee was required to identify a list of model standards for cultural competence and make recommendations to the Legislature on the strengths and weaknesses of those standards. PESB was not required to implement these standards.

Pursuant to RCW 28A.300.1361, OSPI was required to take actions to secure federal funds to support data collection and other model programs. OSPI was not required to collect data regarding the achievement gap or monitor the progress of closing the achievement gap.

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: On a yearly basis, starting December 1, 2010, OSPI must report information to the Committee regarding data collected and progress achieved in closing the achievement gap.

The equity and civil rights office for OSPI and PESB must work with other state entities and stakeholders to develop state policy to support the implementation of the cultural competence standards developed by PESB pursuant to RCW 28A.410.260.

OSPI and PESB must work together to establish rules and procedures to implement the cultural competence standards identified by PESB pursuant to RCW 28A.410.260 across the continuum of educator preparation and continuing professional development.

OSPI and PESB must ensure the implementation of the cultural competence standards by November 1, 2011.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 28, 2010.

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: This is a good bill that will help identify the gaps in collected information and coordinate the data. This bill moves us in the right direction. It helps to change the hearts and the minds of people and, therefore, their attitudes and behaviors.

One way to address the achievement gap is to help teachers to better understand the cultures of these students whom they serve. While the bill does call for cultural competence standards to be implemented by 2011, it is important to keep in mind that cultural competence is a process that cannot be accomplished by force. There is currently only one free cultural competence training course offered in the state and that is by OSPI through the Center for Improvement of Student Learning, which staffs two people. There are approximately 60,000 educators who would need to be trained in Washington. This would reflect a systemic change and not merely a cosmetic change.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Kauffman, prime sponsor; David Brenna, PESB; Erin Jones, OSPI; Barbara Mertens, Washington State School Directors Association.