

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SHB 1829

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As of March 21, 2011

**Title:** An act relating to creating an Indian education division in the office of the superintendent of public instruction.

**Brief Description:** Creating an office of Native education within the office of the superintendent of public instruction.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Billig, Santos, Haigh, Probst, Sells, Kenney, Reykdal, Maxwell, Stanford, Morris, Hasegawa, Ryu, McCoy, Hunt, Moscoso, Hope, Appleton and Ormsby).

**Brief History:** Passed House: 3/02/11, 74-23.

**Committee Activity:** Early Learning & K-12 Education: 3/17/11.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

**Staff:** Juliana Roe (786-7438)

**Background:** Although not required by statute, there has been an Indian Education Office at the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) for over 50 years. The mission of this office is provide leadership, technical assistance, and advocacy to promote academic success for all students and encourage, promote, and develop strategies to infuse the teaching of Native history, culture, language, and government in Washington's schools.

The Indian Education Office is staffed by two employees: a program supervisor and an instructional program specialist.

**Summary of Bill:** An Indian Education Division (Division), known as the Office of Native Education (Office) is created within OSPI. The Superintendent of Instruction (SPI) must appoint an individual to be responsible for the Office. To the extent state funds are available, with additional support of federal and local funds where authorized by law, the duties and responsibilities of the Office are to (1) provide assistance to school districts in meeting the educational needs of American Indian and Alaska Native students; (2) facilitate the development and implementation of curricula and instructional materials in native languages, culture and history, and the concept of tribal sovereignty; (3) provide assistance to districts in the acquisition of funding to develop curricula and instructional materials in conjunction with Native language practitioners and tribal elders; (4) coordinate technical assistance for public

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schools that serve American Indian and Alaska Native students; (5) seek funds to develop and implement various support services for the purposes of increasing the number of American Indian and Alaska Native teachers and principals, and provide continued professional development; (6) facilitate the inclusion of Native language programs in school districts' curricula; and (7) work with all relevant agencies and committees to highlight the need for accurate, useful data that is appropriately disaggregated.

The Office must report to the Governor, the Legislature, and the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs on an annual basis, beginning in December 2012.

A Native education public-private partnership account is created in the custody of the State Treasurer in order to support the activities of the office. All funds must be deposited into the account. Only the SPI can authorize expenditures from the account.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**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: There is very little in state law about native education. This bill gives native students the recognition they need and deserve. Of the 295 school districts in the state, 270 have native students enrolled. Spokane public schools have the largest number of native students of any district in the state. This bill is about educating all students about native history and culture which is important for everyone to learn.

It is important to have a native office in this state because teachers need support in this area. It is difficult for one teacher to explain to non-native teachers the needs of native students. Having access to this type of office will allow more focused and centralized information about native education. Funding is often diluted in education, and this bill will help ensure that money goes to native education. Not all tribes have good working relationships with their school districts. This position will help ameliorate these types of problems.

The office as it stands now has come up with innovative programs such as the northwest tribal curriculum, tribal sovereignty curriculum, and Indian Education summer camp. These programs help to educate and support native students.

Native students have the highest dropout rate in the state. Drug and alcohol addiction and suicide are at alarmingly high rates for native students. There is no cure-all, but if we can reverse the trend we will find the key to fixing the problem. This bill will provide a focus for Indians to have a better tomorrow and allows them to focus on being alive and well.

Washington State has been a leader in Indian education. We want to ensure that Washington continues its commitment to these efforts. This bill shows the state's commitment to its students.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Representative Billig, prime sponsor; Senator Kauffman; Shawn Lewis, OSPI; Don Woodcock, La Portage Metis; Janie Beasley, Swinomish Tribe; Karen Condon, Cherokee Covington, Colville Tribe; John Paul Chaisson-Cardenas, Latino Community; Dawn Vyvyan, Yakima Nation; Virginia Cross; Muckleshoot; Justice Bill, student; Heather Villanueva.