
Education Committee

HB 1896

Brief Description: Expanding civics education in public schools.

Sponsors: Representatives Dolan, Stonier, Lovick, Springer, Appleton, Bergquist, Manweller, Tarleton, Frame, Goodman and Ormsby.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Establishes an expanded civics education teacher training program within the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to select a team of social studies teachers who will develop teacher training materials, provide teacher training across the state, and develop a process for sustaining and building teacher capacity.
- Appropriates \$500,000 from the general fund to the OSPI during fiscal year 2018 for the establishment and implementation of the program.
- Declares an emergency and establishes an effective date.

Hearing Date: 1/8/18

Staff: Ethan Moreno (786-7386).

Background:

Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

In addition to its constitutional charge of supervising all matter pertaining to public schools, the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) and its office has numerous and broad responsibilities prescribed in statute, including:

- making rules and regulations necessary for the administration of public education requirements;
- preparing courses of study and other materials and books for the discharge of education duties;
- fulfilling financial responsibilities, including distributing legislatively allocated funds to districts for the operation of the public school system, and awarding numerous state and federally funded grants;

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- maintaining and revising, in consultation with the State Board of Education, a statewide academic assessment system to measure student knowledge and skills on state learning standards and for purposes of state and federal accountability; and
- satisfying numerous reporting and other duties assigned by the Legislature.

Civics Education and Basic Education.

Civics education provisions are included within requirements governing the state's program of basic education. Goal number two of the four statutorily established basic education goals of school districts obligate districts to provide opportunities for every student to develop the knowledge and skills essential to know and apply the core concepts and principles of civics and history, including different cultures and participation in representative government.

The SPI is responsible for developing the essential academic learning requirements (EALRs) that identify the knowledge and skills all public school students need to know and be able to do based on the four basic education learning goals. For social studies topics, the requirements are adopted by the SPI as the K-12 Social Studies Learning Standards, standards that include specific EALRs and grade level expectations that describe what students should know and be able to do in civics, economics, geography, history and social study skills. School districts do not ratify or formally adopt the standards, as curriculum choices are, with limited exceptions, determined locally.

Civics Education - Graduation Prerequisites.

Graduation credit requirements established by the State Board of Education for the graduating class of 2016 onward require students to complete three credits of social studies. The three social studies credits must include one credit of United States History, one credit of Contemporary World History, a Geography and Problems class (or an equivalent course), one-half credit of civics, and one-half credit for a social studies elective course.

Legislation adopted in 2009 (HB 2132, enacted as ch. 223, Laws of 2009), specifies that the coursework for the one-half credit of civics must include:

- federal, state, and local government organization and procedures;
- rights and responsibilities of citizens addressed in the Washington state and United States Constitutions;
- current issues addressed at each level of government; and
- electoral issues, including elections, ballot measures, initiatives, and referenda.

In addition to the social studies and civics requirements, the study of the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the state of Washington are a graduation prerequisite for public and private high schools in the state.

Summary of Bill:

The Expanded Civics Education Teacher Training Program (Program) is established within the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). The Program must provide for the selection of a team of qualified social studies teachers from across the state who will:

- develop teacher training materials using an existing textbook that includes civic engagement with national, state, tribal, and local government;

- provide teacher training across the state using the tools established by the OSPI including the "Six Proven Practices for Enhancing Civic Education," the "(C3) Instructional Framework found in the College, Career, and Civic Life," "The Guardian of Democracy-Successor Report to the Civic Mission of Schools," and "CIRCLE: The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement"; and
- develop a process for sustaining and building teacher capacity.

The Program must assure an increase in the number of:

- teachers with the knowledge and skills to effectively engage students in civic education;
- students who have a basic understanding of how governments work; and
- students from every demographic and socioeconomic group who know their rights and responsibilities within society and are prepared to exercise them.

In implementing the Program, the OSPI must contract with a Washington state-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that has an extensive track record of nonpartisan, fact-based federal, tribal, state, and local civic education of students and adults.

The OSPI is authorized to accept gifts and grants to assist with the establishment and implementation of the Program.

Appropriation: The sum of \$500,000, or as much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated for fiscal year 2018 to the OSPI for the establishment and implementation of the Program.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 8, 2018.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.