

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## 2SHB 1896

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Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Expanding civics education in public school.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Dolan, Stonier, Lovick, Springer, Appleton, Bergquist, Manweller, Tarleton, Frame, Goodman and Ormsby).

**House Committee on Education**  
**House Committee on Appropriations**  
**Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education**  
**Senate Committee on Ways & Means**

### **Background:**

#### Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

In addition to its constitutional charge of supervising all matters pertaining to public schools, the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) and its office have 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;
- maintaining and revising, in consultation with the State Board of Education (SBE), 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 obligates 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.

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*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.*

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 for civics, economics, geography, history and social study skills. School districts do not ratify or formally adopt the standards, as curriculum choices are generally determined locally.

#### Civics Education—Graduation Prerequisites.

Graduation credit requirements established by the SBE for the graduating class of 2016 and subsequent classes require students to complete three credits of social studies. These 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.

If the SBE increases the number of course credits in social studies that are required for high school graduation, the SBE must also require that at least one-half credit of that requirement be coursework in civics. The content of the civics requirement must include but is not limited to:

- federal, state, and local government organization and procedures;
- rights and responsibilities of citizens addressed in the Washington 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 is a graduation prerequisite for public and private high schools in the state.

#### National History Day and Washington History Day.

The National History Day organization (NHD) offers year-long academic programs for middle and high school students in and outside of the United States. In addition to providing professional development opportunities and curriculum materials for teachers, the NHD operates the National History Day Contest, a contest that Washington participates in as an affiliate through the Washington History Day Program (History Day Program). The History Day Program is administered by the Washington State Historical Society (WSHS). According to the WSHS, more than 8,000 students participate in the History Day Program each year.

The WSHS, a tax-exempt nonprofit organization, is designated by the Legislature as a trustee of the state's historical articles and properties. The WSHS's duties include collecting and preserving historical materials, operating state museums, conducting educational activities and historical celebrations, engaging in fund-raising, and exchanging historical property.

#### **Summary:**

#### Expanded Civics Education Teacher Training Program.

Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, an 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, and when appropriate, civics education specialists, from across the state who will:

- develop teacher training materials using existing open educational resources that include civics information on national, state, tribal, and local governments, and the civics component of the federally administered naturalization test;
- provide teacher training across the state using the tools established by the OSPI; and
- provide professional learning opportunities in accordance with specified provisions.

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.

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

#### Requirements for Stand-Alone Civics Courses.

Beginning with or before the 2020-21 school year, each school district that operates a high school must provide a mandatory one-half credit stand-alone course in civics for each high school student. With the exception of civics content and instruction that may be embedded in a social studies course that offers students the opportunity to earn both high school and postsecondary credit, civics content and instruction embedded in other social studies courses do not satisfy this new requirement.

The content of the civics course must include, but is not limited to:

- federal, state, tribal, and local government organization and procedures;
- rights and responsibilities of citizens addressed in the Washington and United States Constitutions;
- current issues addressed at each level of government;
- electoral issues, including elections, ballot measures, initiatives, and referenda;
- the study and completion of the civics component of the federally administered naturalization test; and
- the importance in a free society of living certain basic values and character traits.

Credit awarded to students who complete the civics course must be applied to course credit requirements in social studies that are necessary for high school graduation.

Provisions directing the SBE require at least one-half credit of coursework in civics if the SBE increases the number of social studies credits that are required for graduation are repealed.

#### Demonstration Sites for Enhanced Civics Education.

Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the OSPI must select two school districts that are diverse in size and in geographic and demographic makeup to serve as demonstration sites for enhanced civics education. These demonstration sites must:

- implement and assess an in-depth civics education program that includes the six proven instructional practices for enhancing civic education in kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12) classrooms;
- collaborate with programs and agencies in the local community in order to expand after-school and summer civics education opportunities;
- monitor and report the level of penetration of civics education in school and out-of-school programs;
- ensure that underserved students including rural, low-income, immigrant, and refugee students are prioritized in the implementation of programs;
- develop evaluation standards and a procedure for endorsing civics education curriculum that can be recommended for use in other school districts and out-of-school programs; and
- provide an annual report on the demonstration sites by December 1 each year to the Governor and the committees of the Legislature with oversight over K-12 education.

Washington History Day Program.

Effective July 1, 2018, responsibility for administering the History Day Program is transferred from the WSHS to the OSPI. Subject to funds appropriated for this specific purpose, the OSPI is responsible for the administration and coordination of the History Day Program, including providing necessary staff support.

Although the OSPI has administrative and coordination duties, the History Day Program must be operated as a partnership between the OSPI, the WSHS, and private parties interested in providing funding and in-kind support. The WSHS, in coordination with the OSPI, is directed to promote the History Day Program and provide access and support for students who are conducting primary and secondary research of historical Washington documents and commentary.

A nonappropriated Washington History Day Account (which can be populated with public or private moneys) is created in the custody of the Washington State Treasurer. Only the SPI or the SPI's designee may authorize expenditures from the account. The account will retain any interest earned on account balances.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

House	98	0	
Senate	49	0	(Senate amended)
House			(House refused to concur)
Senate	49	0	(Senate receded/amended)
House	95	3	(House concurred)

**Effective:** June 7, 2018