
Education Committee

HB 2558

Brief Description: Preventing public identification or stigmatization of public school students.

Sponsors: Representatives Kirby, Santos, Senn and Kloba.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Prohibits schools and districts from publicly identifying or stigmatizing students based on attendance, academic performance, or behavior that is unsatisfactory.
- Requires school principals, classroom teachers, and paraeducators to confer, annually, to develop or review policies and practices designed to improve school climate and create a safe, respectful learning environment.
- Directs the Center for the Improvement of Student Learning to convene a work group to make certain recommendations on school climate and safe, respectful learning environment training requirements for educators, and report to the Legislature by November 1, 2018.

Hearing Date: 1/15/18

Staff: Megan Wargacki (786-7194).

Background:

School Climate and Safe, Respectful Learning Environment.

The school code includes various references to "school climate," "school culture," "safe learning environment," and "respectful learning environment." In 2011, the Legislature directed the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and the Office of the Education Ombuds to convene a work group on school bullying and harassment prevention in order to develop, recommend, and implement strategies to improve school climate and create respectful learning environments in all public schools in Washington.

When the Legislature revised the evaluation system for school principals and classroom teachers, it created minimum evaluation criteria. For school principals, one of the criteria is creating a

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school culture that promotes the ongoing improvement of learning and teaching for students and staff. For classroom teachers, one of the criteria is fostering and managing a safe, positive learning environment. In 2017, the Legislature required that one of the state standards of practice for paraeducators must be supporting a positive and safe learning environment.

Center for the Improvement of Student Learning.

The Legislature created the Center for the Improvement of Student Learning (CISL) to facilitate access to information, best practices, and materials related to improving the education system. The Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) appoints CISL's director, who works in collaboration with the OSPI staff, external partners, and students' families to address the academic and non-academic needs of all students, with a specific focus on students who are underserved in schools.

Summary of Bill:

Schools and school districts are prohibited from publicly identifying or stigmatizing, or taking any action that would likely publicly identify or stigmatize, a student based on attendance, academic performance, or behavior that is unsatisfactory.

School principals, classroom teachers, and paraeducators must confer annually to develop or review policies and practices designed to improve school climate and create a safe, respectful learning environment. These policies and practices must be consistent with the prohibition described above.

The CISL is directed to convene a work group to make recommendations on school climate and safe, respectful learning environment training requirements for educators. These recommendations must emphasize that public identification or stigmatization are counterproductive to the state's goal of improving school climate and creating a safe, respectful learning environment. The work group must include a representative from: the OSPI, the Professional Educator Standards Board, the Paraeducator Board, a school administrator association, a school principal association, and an association of teacher preparation programs.

By November 1, 2018, the work group must report to the Legislature with the following:

- the components of school climate and safe, respectful learning environment training that are common to all types of educators at all levels of experience, as agreed upon by the majority of the work group members;
- best practices for making principals and administrators accountable for improving school climate and creating a safe, respectful learning environment; and
- options for incorporating the agreed upon training components into: (i) various educator preparation programs; (ii) initial and renewal educator certification and paraeducator certificate requirements; (iii) evaluations and training on the components of evaluation criteria; and (iv) other trainings or professional development.

In developing its recommendations, the work group must consider teacher and principal evaluation training materials developed to address these topics. In addition, the work group must have a goal of developing recommendations that will work for most, if not all, schools.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 11, 2018.

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