
SECOND SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1896

State of Washington

65th Legislature

2018 Regular Session

By House Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Dolan, Stonier, Lovick, Springer, Appleton, Bergquist, Manweller, Tarleton, Frame, Goodman, and Ormsby)

READ FIRST TIME 02/06/18.

1 AN ACT Relating to the expansion of civics education in public
2 schools; adding a new section to chapter 28A.230 RCW; adding a new
3 section to chapter 28A.415 RCW; adding a new section to chapter
4 28A.300 RCW; creating a new section; and repealing RCW 28A.230.093.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that effective
7 civics education teaches students how to be active, informed, and
8 engaged citizens. The legislature recognizes that RCW 28A.150.210
9 identifies civics as one component of a basic education and that one-
10 half credit in civics is required for high school graduation. The
11 required civics content, however, may be embedded in another social
12 studies course.

13 Civics requirements are meant to ensure that every student
14 receives a high-quality civics education from kindergarten through
15 twelfth grade. The legislature also recognizes, however, that two
16 factors limit the effectiveness of civics education.

17 First, when the one-half civics credit is embedded in other
18 courses rather than taught in a stand-alone civics course, the
19 required content is easily diluted or ignored altogether. Pressure to
20 emphasize other areas of the curriculum can relegate civics education
21 to a lesser role.

1 Second, professional development opportunities for teachers in
2 civics education are rare. In many districts, due to limited budgets
3 and competing demands for funding, opportunities for teachers to
4 deepen instructional and curricular practices in civics do not exist.

5 The legislature, therefore, intends to: Require school districts
6 to provide a mandatory stand-alone civics course for all high school
7 students; and support the development of an in-depth and interactive
8 teacher professional development program to improve the ability of
9 teachers throughout the state to provide students with an effective
10 civics education from kindergarten through twelfth grade. This
11 expanded civics education program seeks to ensure that students have
12 basic knowledge about national, state, tribal, and local governments,
13 and that they develop the skills and dispositions needed to become
14 informed and engaged citizens.

15 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.230
16 RCW to read as follows:

17 (1)(a) Beginning with or before the 2020-21 school year, each
18 school district that operates a high school must provide a mandatory
19 one-half credit stand-alone course in civics for each high school
20 student. Civics content and instruction embedded in other social
21 studies courses do not satisfy the requirements of this subsection.

22 (b) Credit awarded to students who complete the civics course
23 must be applied to course credit requirements in social studies that
24 are required for high school graduation.

25 (2) The content of the civics course must include, but is not
26 limited to:

27 (a) Federal, state, tribal, and local government organization and
28 procedures;

29 (b) Rights and responsibilities of citizens addressed in the
30 Washington state and United States Constitutions;

31 (c) Current issues addressed at each level of government;

32 (d) Electoral issues, including elections, ballot measures,
33 initiatives, and referenda;

34 (e) The study and completion of the civics component of the
35 federally administered naturalization test required of persons
36 seeking to become naturalized United States citizens; and

37 (f) The importance in a free society of living the basic values
38 and character traits specified in RCW 28A.150.211.

1 (3) Neither school districts nor the state board of education may
2 require students to obtain a passing grade on the course required by
3 this section as a requirement for high school graduation.

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.415
5 RCW to read as follows:

6 (1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this
7 specific purpose, an expanded civics education teacher training
8 program is established within the office of the superintendent of
9 public instruction.

10 (2) The program must provide for the selection of a team of
11 qualified social studies teachers, and when appropriate, civics
12 education specialists, from across the state who will:

13 (a) Develop teacher training materials using existing open
14 educational resources (OERs) that include civics information on
15 national, state, tribal, and local government, and the civics
16 component of the federally administered naturalization test required
17 of persons seeking to become naturalized United States citizens;

18 (b) Provide teacher training across the state, consistent with
19 provisions in this chapter, and using the tools established by the
20 office of the superintendent of public instruction including the
21 college, career, and civic life (C3) framework and the six proven
22 instructional practices for enhancing civic education; and

23 (c) Provide professional learning opportunities as described in
24 section 2(3), chapter 77, Laws of 2016, which states that
25 professional learning shall incorporate differentiated, coherent,
26 sustained, and evidence-based strategies that improve educator
27 effectiveness and student achievement, including job-embedded
28 coaching or other forms of assistance to support educators' transfer
29 of new knowledge and skills into their practice.

30 (3) The program shall assure an increase in the number of:

31 (a) Teachers with the knowledge and skills to effectively engage
32 students in civics education;

33 (b) Students who have a basic understanding of how governments
34 work; and

35 (c) Students from every demographic and socioeconomic group who
36 know their rights and responsibilities within society and are
37 prepared to exercise them.

1 (4) The office of the superintendent of public instruction may
2 accept gifts and grants to assist with the establishment and
3 implementation of the program established in this section.

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.300
5 RCW to read as follows:

6 Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this
7 specific purpose, the office of the superintendent of public
8 instruction shall select two school districts that are diverse in
9 size and in geographic and demographic makeup to serve as
10 demonstration sites for enhanced civics education. These
11 demonstration sites will:

12 (1) Implement and assess an in-depth civics education program
13 that includes the six proven instructional practices for enhancing
14 civic education in kindergarten through twelfth grade classrooms;

15 (2) Collaborate with programs and agencies in the local community
16 in order to expand after-school and summer civics education
17 opportunities;

18 (3) Monitor and report the level of penetration of civics
19 education in school and out-of-school programs;

20 (4) Ensure that underserved students including rural, low-income,
21 immigrant, and refugee students are prioritized in the implementation
22 of programs;

23 (5) Develop evaluation standards and a procedure for endorsing
24 civics education curriculum that can be recommended for use in other
25 school districts and out-of-school programs; and

26 (6) Provide an annual report on the demonstration sites by
27 December 1st each year to the governor and the committees of the
28 legislature with oversight over K-12 education.

29 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** RCW 28A.230.093 (Social studies course
30 credits—Civics coursework) and 2009 c 223 s 3 are each repealed.

--- END ---