

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1314

As Reported by House Committee On:
Education

Title: An act relating to ethnic studies in public schools.

Brief Description: Concerning ethnic studies in public schools.

Sponsors: Representatives Ortiz-Self, Pellicciotti, Valdez, Bergquist, Dolan, Santos, Thai, Appleton, Frame, Ryu, Davis, Macri, Stanford, Jinkins and Pollet.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/12/19, 2/18/19 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to: (1) adopt state learning standards that identify the knowledge and skills that all public students need to be global citizens in a global society with an appreciation for the contributions of diverse cultures; and (2) develop a model ethnic studies curriculum for use in grades 7 through 12.
- Establishes an advisory committee with specified members to make recommendations to the OSPI regarding these requirements.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Dolan, Vice Chair; Paul, Vice Chair; Bergquist, Callan, Kilduff, Ortiz-Self, Stonier, Thai and Valdez.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Steele, Ranking Minority Member; McCaslin, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Caldier, Corry, Kraft, Rude and Ybarra.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Volz, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Harris.

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.

Staff: Megan Wargacki (786-7194).

Background:

A basic education is an evolving program of instruction that is intended to provide students with the opportunity to become responsible and respectful global citizens, to contribute to their economic well-being and that of their families and communities, to explore and understand different perspectives, and to enjoy productive and satisfying lives.

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) is responsible for developing and revising the essential academic learning requirements (known as the state learning standards) that identify the knowledge and skills all public school students need to know and be able to do to meet the intention of the basic education program. The OSPI is also responsible for adopting grade level content expectations aligned to the state learning standards and, in consultation with the State Board of Education, developing, maintaining, and revising a statewide academic assessment system that is designed to determine if students have mastered the state learning standards. School districts must teach content aligned to the state learning standards when the content area is required or offered, but districts do not ratify or formally adopt the state learning standards, as curriculum choices are, with limited exceptions, determined by school districts.

School districts are required to use the Since Time Immemorial: Tribal Sovereignty in Washington state curriculum (STI). The STI, which is available free of charge, teaches students about tribal sovereignty in Washington and is aligned to the state learning standards. The STI was developed by the OSPI in partnership with the 29 federally recognized Indian tribes whose reservations are located in Washington.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

By September 1, 2020, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) must:

- adopt state learning standards and grade level expectations (GLEs) that identify the knowledge and skills that all public school students need to be global citizens in a global society with an appreciation for the contributions of diverse cultures; and
- develop a model ethnic studies curriculum for use in grades 7 through 12 that is designed to prepare students to be global citizens in a global society with an appreciation for the contributions of diverse cultures.

The model curriculum must be based on the state learning standards, including those adopted as described above, and must be posted on the OSPI's website. The model curriculum, the state learning standards, and the GLEs must be periodically updated to incorporate best practices in ethnic studies.

Public schools with students in grades 7 through 12 are encouraged to offer an ethnic studies course that incorporates the model curriculum.

The OSPI must establish an ethnic studies advisory committee to:

- recommend state learning standards and the GLEs that identify the knowledge and skills that all public school students need to be global citizens in a global society with an appreciation for the contributions of diverse cultures; and
- advise, assist, and make recommendations to the OSPI regarding the development of the model ethnic studies curriculum.

The advisory committee must be composed of a majority of educators with experience in teaching ethnic studies from public high schools and institutions of higher education, including educators representing the Washington state commissions on African-American Affairs, Asian Pacific American Affairs, and Hispanic Affairs.

The Legislature intends that nothing in this act supersedes the use of the Since Time Immemorial: Tribal Sovereignty in Washington curriculum.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill: (1) removes the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs from the ethnic studies advisory committee; (2) provides that the Legislature intends that nothing in this act supersedes the use of the Since Time Immemorial: Tribal Sovereignty in Washington state curriculum; and (3) changes the term "essential academic learning requirements" to "state learning standards."

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 19, 2019.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Ethnic studies is a way to represent the stories and histories of diverse cultures in schools. Every student in Washington should get to experience a curriculum that reflects and includes their history and the struggles and accomplishments of their ancestors. Schools have some token days or months devoted to studies about the contributions of people of color. Ethnic studies courses boost the attendance and academic performance of students, particular those at risk. The bill aligns with the the goals of basic education in state law.

Students and teachers across the United States are mobilizing to make sure that the curriculum in schools represents diverse ethnicities and cultures. Arizona, Indiana, and California already require ethnic studies in their schools, and some school districts in Washington do the same. Unlike math and science curriculum that are readily available, ethnic studies curricula are often developed on a school or district basis. This bill would allow Washington to have an established curriculum for framework that districts can use if they decide to offer ethnic studies.

It is good to require that the advisory committee includes a majority of educators with experience teaching ethnic studies, and members of the state ethnic commissions and Governor's Office of Indian Affairs. It is important to have members of traditionally underrepresented groups advising on the creation of this curriculum. Learning should be relevant, effective, engaging, and grounded in research-based approaches about how students learn. The multicultural perspective in the curriculum will help students feel valued and celebrated in our schools. All students should gain an understanding and appreciation of cultures different from their own. This state's and our nation's dominant race can live their entire lives without learning anything about other cultures, races, or ethnicities. This should be changed.

There is no pipeline from high school to get students excited for courses in ethnic studies at higher education institutions. The first time that students learn about the contributions of different communities and how these communities have worked together should not be in higher education. This bill will have a large impact on students and their preparedness for higher education.

There will be an amendment to remove the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs from the advisory committee. There is a tribal curriculum already, and it is important to make sure that the ethnic studies curriculum does not conflict with that curriculum. The term "essential academic learning requirements" will be changed to "state learning standards."

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Ortiz-Self, prime sponsor; Simone Boe, Washington Education Association; Harium Martin-Morris, State Board of Education; Henry Pollet, Associated Students of Western Washington University; and Dave Mastin, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.