
Education Committee

HB 2653

Brief Description: Determining cultural bias in kindergarten assessments.

Sponsors: Representatives Thai, Ybarra, Bergquist, Goodman, Ortiz-Self, Sells, Lovick, Valdez, Entenman, Callan, Senn, Gregerson, Leavitt, Ramos, Pollet, Davis and Kloba.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Directs the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to convene a 10-member work group (work group) to have the Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills materials reviewed by experts trained in identifying cultural bias and by representatives of culturally and linguistically diverse subgroups.
- Establishes membership and duties for the work group and directs it to submit two reports to legislative and other recipients by December 1, 2020, and December 1, 2021.
- Repeals expired provisions relating to a 2012 implementation and administration Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills work group, and implementation waivers that the Superintendent of Public Instruction was authorized to issue.

Hearing Date: 1/27/20

Staff: Ethan Moreno (786-7386).

Background:

WaKids - General Information and Gradual Implementation.

The Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKids inventory) is kindergarten readiness assessment that is, with limited exceptions, administered at the beginning of the year to all public school kindergarten students.

The implementation of the WaKids inventory was a multiyear process that coincided with the statewide transition to exclusively full-day kindergarten programs. The initial implementation of

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the WaKids inventory began with 51 districts in the 2010-11 school year with a pilot project. Implementation of the WaKids inventory significantly increased in subsequent years, but renewable waivers for administering the assessment were available at the discretion of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) until full statewide implementation of all-day kindergarten programs. By the 2017-18 school year, the same year that statewide implementation of all-day kindergarten was completed, 293 districts administered the WaKids inventory to nearly 81,000 students.

Fairness and Bias Review.

Legislation adopted in 2011 directed the SPI and the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) to, prior to the broad implementation of the WaKids inventory, conduct a fairness and bias review of the assessment. This process was directed to include opportunities for input from the Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee (EOGOAC), a group tasked with making annual recommendations to the Governor, the Legislature, and education entities on addressing the achievement gap, and from an additional diverse group of community representatives, parents, and educators. A report of recommendations resulting from the bias and sensitivity review of the WaKids inventory was published in 2011.

Implementation and Administration Work Group.

In accordance with the gradual implementation of the WaKids inventory, the SPI, in consultation with the DCYF, was directed in 2012 to convene an implementation and administration work group to provide:

- input and recommendations with respect to implementation of the WaKids inventory;
- recommendations regarding the optimum way to administer the WaKids inventory to children in half-day kindergarten while ensuring that they receive the required instruction; and
- recommendations with respect to achieving the goal of replacing district assessments with the WaKids inventory.

The implementation and administration work group was required by statute to terminate upon full statewide implementation of all-day kindergarten.

Summary of Bill:

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), in consultation with the DCYF and the EOGOAC, is directed to convene a 10-member work group (work group) to:

- have the WaKids inventory materials reviewed by experts trained in identifying cultural bias and by representatives of culturally and linguistically diverse subgroups;
- ensure that processes used to develop the WaKids inventory are inclusive of diverse student subgroups and large enough to constitute a representative sample;
- eliminate items that produce the largest racial and cultural performance gaps, and select items that produce the smallest gaps;
- screen for and eliminate items, references, and terms that are more likely to be offensive to certain groups;
- determine if the training teachers get to implement the inventory addresses implicit bias; and
- make recommendations to the Legislature based on its findings.

The work group is authorized to contract with an expert in examining cultural bias in assessments. For purposes of the work group, a test is considered biased when the scores of one group are significantly different and have higher predictive validity, which is the extent to which a score on an assessment predicts future performance, than another group.

Regarding membership, the work group must include:

- one representative from the OSPI;
- one representative from the DCYF;
- one representative from the EOGOAC;
- five representatives, including three teachers determined by the Washington Education Association and two principals determined by the Association of Washington State Principals, who are currently using the WaKids inventory; and
- two parents chosen by the Washington State Parent Teacher Association.

The work group is directed to submit a report and recommendations to the education committees of the Senate and the House of Representatives and the EOGOAC by December 1, 2020. A subsequent report on the recommendations implemented and analysis of student scores must be submitted to the same recipients by December 1, 2021.

Provisions governing the implementation and administration work group that was convened in 2012 are repealed, as are expired provisions authorizing the SPI to issue renewable waivers to exempt schools from implementing the WaKids inventory.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 26, 2020.

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