

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5023

As Passed House - Amended:

April 4, 2019

Title: An act relating to ethnic studies materials and resources for public school students.

Brief Description: Concerning ethnic studies materials and resources for public school students.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators Hasegawa, Conway, Frockt, Wellman, Wilson, C. and Saldaña).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 3/18/19, 3/26/19 [DPA].

Floor Activity:

Passed House - Amended: 4/4/19, 58-35.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill (As Amended by House)

- Requires the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to adopt essential academic learning requirements and grade-level expectations 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.
- Tasks the OSPI with identifying and making available ethnic studies materials and resources for use in grades 7 through 12.
- Directs the OSPI to convene an advisory committee to advise, assist, and make recommendations regarding the identification of ethnic studies materials and resources for all grades, and to develop a framework to support teaching of ethnic studies to students in grades 7 through 12.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Dolan, Vice Chair; Paul, Vice Chair; Bergquist, Callan, Kilduff, Ortiz-Self, Rude, Stonier, Thai and Valdez.

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.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Steele, Ranking Minority Member; McCaslin, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Volz, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Caldier, Kraft and Ybarra.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Corry.

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 (EALRs, and 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. For example, the state learning standards for social studies describe what students should know and be able to do in civics, economics, geography, history, and social studies. These standards are based on seven guiding principals, one of which is to incorporate multiple perspectives and cultural awareness.

The OSPI is also responsible for adopting grade level content expectations aligned to the EALRs 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 EALRs. School districts must teach content aligned to the EALRs when the content area is required or offered, but districts do not ratify or formally adopt the EALRs, 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 curriculum (STI). The STI, which is available free of charge, teaches students about tribal sovereignty in Washington and is aligned to the EALRs. The STI was developed by the OSPI in partnership with the 29 federally recognized Indian tribes whose reservations are located in Washington.

Summary of Amended Bill:

By September 1, 2020, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) must adopt essential academic learning requirements (EALRs) and grade-level expectations 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. These EALRs and grade-level expectations must be periodically updated to incorporate best practices in ethnic studies.

By September 1, 2020, the OSPI must identify and make available ethnic studies materials and resources for use in grades 7 through 12. The materials and resources must be designed

to prepare students to be global citizens in a global society with an appreciation for the contributions of multiple cultures. The materials and resources must be posted on the OSPI's website. Public schools with students in grades 7 through 12 are encouraged to offer an ethnic studies course that incorporates the materials and resources identified by the OSPI.

The OSPI must establish an ethnic studies advisory committee. The committee must advise, assist, and make recommendations to the OSPI regarding the identification of ethnic studies materials and resources for use in grades 7 through 12 and for use in elementary schools. The committee must also develop a framework to support the teaching of ethnic studies to students in grades 7 through 12. The ethnic studies 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.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Amended 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) The ethnic studies curriculum has reversed the power dynamics for some students. Instead of being alienated for their differences, they are empowered to make a difference. Ethnic studies is also a study of the oppression and the opportunity to overcome oppression. Some immigrant students must navigate misperceptions and assumptions that demonize their cultures within a Eurocentric educational environment. College ethnic studies have ameliorated some students' concerns and validated their experiences by offering a perspective of ethnic communities that are rarely presented in text books. Students should have this opportunity before college because ethnic studies supports learning for all students.

Multiple studies show increases in math and literacy skills for students of color and for white students who take ethnic studies. There are also increases in student engagement for students of color and for white students who take ethnic studies. In addition, for all students who take ethnic studies, there are increases in critical thinking and access to participation in democracy. Ethnic studies is a practice with documented outcomes in closing opportunity gaps.

The changes to the House bill were offered by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Professional development should be offered for teachers using the ethnic studies materials. A majority of the advisory committee should be practitioners and the committee should include the representatives from the state ethnic commissions. This type of curriculum would be better for students aged 7 through 12, rather than in, or in addition to,

grades 7 through 12. This type of study is being introduced in early learning. There should not be a gap between kindergarten and grade 7.

Ethnic studies curricula are not readily available, unlike math or science curricula. Schools and school districts have been having to pull together curricula when they decide to implement ethnic studies. This bill is timely, because students and educators have been working to include the stories of diverse ethnicities in their classes. Other states have passed legislation to include ethnic studies curricula or frameworks. It would be good to identify existing resources and repackage the resources to make them more readily available to school districts.

The state should develop respectful and global citizens. This bill aligns with the goals of basic education. There need to be more teachers that look like the students. There needs to be more curricula that reflects the history of the students in schools. White people should not be able to go their whole lives without learning about people of color, and about other cultures.

(Opposed) The repeated references to global citizenry in this bill and in text books are disturbing. Global citizenry is not about people from all over the world getting together and getting along. It means being subject to an unelected global government that will usurp the legislative, executive, and judicial power of this nation. It will have the power to tax and police other nations and conscript Americans. Children are being desensitized to this concept. Students need to be educated American citizens. They need to learn about other countries and other cultures. This bill is not about substance. The universities have been developing ethnic programs for decades and these courses are often known as oppression studies. These college courses used to be optional, but are now largely mandatory.

It is unknown whether this bill came from legislators or from teachers and parents who are close to students. There is a concern that the United Nations or United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization was involved in writing this definition of education for global citizens in a global society. There should be an emphasis on the United States, America, or even Washington. Students can not develop an appreciation for the contributions of diverse cultures without developing an appreciation for the American culture. There is a concern that this curriculum will replace other courses or that an extra hour will be added to the school day. Representatives of other cultures should be considered as additions to the advisory committee. Rather than emphasizing diversity, universality should be emphasized—what brings us together. Identity politics should not be in schools. Schools should be developing student's pride in our country and our representative form of government.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Senator Hasegawa, prime sponsor; Marissa Rathbone, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; Dawn Vyvyan, Sauk-Suiattle Tribe; Simone Boe, Washington Education Association; and Kaaren Heikes, Washington State Board of Education.

(Opposed) Ann Streit; and Nancy Johnson.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.