

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6066

As Passed Senate, February 12, 2020

Title: An act relating to ethnic studies materials and resources for public school students in grades kindergarten through six.

Brief Description: Expanding ethnic studies materials and resources for public school students in grades kindergarten through six.

Sponsors: Senators Hasegawa, Kuderer, Nguyen, Stanford, Saldaña and Wilson, C.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/17/20, 1/31/20 [DP, DNP].

Floor Activity:

Passed Senate: 2/12/20, 36-10.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction and an existing advisory committee to identify ethnic studies materials and resources for all grades by including grades K-6.
- Encourages public schools with students in grades K-6 to incorporate the materials and resources.
- Adds that the advisory committee consider the need for piloting professional development and adds educators with experience in age-appropriate ethnic studies curricula to the committee.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Wellman, Chair; Wilson, C., Vice Chair; Hunt, Mullet, Pedersen and Salomon.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Hawkins, Ranking Member; Padden and Wagoner.

Staff: Ailey Kato (786-7434)

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.

Background: Essential Academic Learning Requirements. Current law defines a basic education, in part, to be an evolving program of instruction intended to provide students with the opportunity to become responsible and respectful global citizens.

In 2019, the Legislature directed the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to adopt Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs) and grade-level expectations by September 1, 2020 identifying knowledge and skills all public school students need to be global citizens in a global society with an appreciation for the contributions of diverse cultures. The term EALRs has been updated to the term state learning standards in some places in the education code.

Ethnic Studies Materials and Resources. Current law requires OSPI to identify and make available ethnic studies materials and resources for use in grades 7-12. Public schools with students in grades 7-12 are encouraged to offer an ethnic studies course incorporating the materials and resources.

Ethnic Studies Advisory Committee. In 2019, the Legislature directed OSPI to establish an advisory committee to advise, assist, and make recommendations regarding the identification of materials and resources for use in elementary schools and grades 7-12. The advisory committee is also developing a framework to support teaching ethnic studies in grades 7-12.

The advisory committee includes a majority of educators with experience teaching ethnic studies and educators representing the Washington State commissions on African-American Affairs, Asian Pacific American Affairs, and Hispanic Affairs.

Summary of Bill: State Learning Standards. By September 1, 2021, OSPI must identify existing state learning standards addressing knowledge and skills all public school students need to be global citizens in a global society with an appreciation for the contributions of diverse cultures instead of adopting EALRs and grade-level expectations.

Ethnic Studies Materials and Resources. The deadline for OSPI to identify and make available ethnic studies and materials and resources is extended by one year and adds they are for use in all grades including grades K-6. Public schools with students in grades K-6 are encouraged to incorporate the materials and resources.

Ethnic Studies Advisory Committee. The advisory committee must advise, assist, and make recommendations addressing grades K-12 and to consider the need for piloting ethnic studies materials and resources and professional development. Educators with experience in age-appropriate ethnic studies curricula are added to the committee membership.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Students in earlier grades need to be included in ethnic studies because it is a critical learning period in child development. Biases can start as young as six months old, and prejudice and implicit bias can be present when children enter kindergarten. Brains categorize and differentiate, which means people cannot be colorblind. Multiple studies show educational outcomes improve with culturally relevant and inclusive teaching. Students need to see themselves in the materials they use at school. The classroom needs to be a welcoming environment for all students. Lacing ethnic studies from kindergarten through twelfth grade will provide students with the opportunity to develop empathy for others who might not look like them and celebrate the contributions of all people. Professional development on this topic will help recruit and retain teachers of color. Ethnic studies should incorporate analysis of systems of oppression, privilege, and intersectionality.

OTHER: Before you extend ethnic studies to the elementary school grades, ethnic studies should be defined. There is a difference between teaching students about the appreciation of different cultures and histories, and turning kindergarteners into angry activists for social justice based on someone else's opinions.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Bob Hasegawa, Prime Sponsor; Tracy Castro-Gill, Washington Ethnic Studies Now Coalition; Becca Ritchie, Washington Education Association, BAT Caucus; Simone Boe, Washington Education Association; Denisha Saucedo, Washington Education Association, BAT Caucus; Alisha Saucedo, student; Crystal Pardue, ACLU of Washington; Jerry Price, OSPI.

OTHER: Randy Kessler, StandWithUs Northwest.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.