

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SSB 5570

---

---

As Passed Senate, March 6, 2025

**Title:** An act relating to supporting public school instruction in tribal sovereignty and federally recognized Indian tribes.

**Brief Description:** Supporting public school instruction in tribal sovereignty and federally recognized Indian tribes.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Kauffman, Wellman, Hasegawa, Nobles, Riccelli, Stanford, Valdez and Wilson, C.).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/06/25, 2/11/25 [DP-WM, DNP, w/oRec].

Ways & Means: 2/24/25, 2/27/25 [DPS, w/oRec].

**Floor Activity:** Passed Senate: 3/6/25, 35-14.

### Brief Summary of First Substitute Bill

- Requires school districts to incorporate curricula about the nearest federally recognized Indian tribe or tribes into their social studies curricula no later than September 1, 2026.
- Directs the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to assist school districts in identifying federally recognized Indian tribes whose reservations or traditional lands are in or near the district and to collaborate with tribes that may have unique consultation challenges.
- Directs OSPI to report to the Legislature concerning compensation for tribal expertise, consultation, or collaboration by September 1, 2026.

---

### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

---

*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

Signed by Senators Wellman, Chair; Nobles, Vice Chair, K-12; Wilson, C., Vice Chair, Early Learning; Cortes, Hansen and Krishnadasan.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass.  
Signed by Senator McCune.

**Minority Report:** That it be referred without recommendation.  
Signed by Senators Harris, Ranking Member; Dozier.

**Staff:** Elena Becker (786-7493)

---

## SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5570 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Robinson, Chair; Stanford, Vice Chair, Operating; Trudeau, Vice Chair, Capital; Frame, Vice Chair, Finance; Gildon, Ranking Member, Operating; Torres, Assistant Ranking Member, Operating; Schoesler, Ranking Member, Capital; Dozier, Assistant Ranking Member, Capital; Boehnke, Cleveland, Conway, Dhingra, Hansen, Hasegawa, Kauffman, Muzzall, Pedersen, Riccelli, Saldaña, Warnick, Wellman and Wilson, C..

**Minority Report:** That it be referred without recommendation.  
Signed by Senators Braun and Wagoner.

**Staff:** Trevor Press (786-7446)

**Background:** The John McCoy (lulilaš) Since Time Immemorial Curriculum. In 2005, Representative John McCoy, whose Lushootseed name is lulilaš, introduced legislation which began the statewide process of incorporating information about tribal culture, government, and history into social studies courses. In 2024, the Legislature named the resulting Since Time Immemorial curriculum for McCoy.

The John McCoy (lulilaš) Since Time Immemorial Curriculum (curriculum) is maintained by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and includes curricular resources for students in early learning programs, elementary, middle, and high school. The Office of Native Education within OSPI frequently schedules tribal sovereignty curriculum trainings for educators.

The curriculum has been endorsed by all 29 federally recognized tribes located in Washington State.

Instruction in Tribal Sovereignty. Beginning in 2015, school districts were required to incorporate curricula about the history, culture, and government of the nearest federally

recognized Indian tribe or tribes when reviewing or adopting social studies curriculum. Districts are directed to use the curriculum to fulfill this requirement and may modify that curriculum to incorporate regionally specific elements.

School districts are further directed to collaborate with any federally recognized Indian tribe within their district, and neighboring Indian tribes, during the process of incorporating expanded and improved curricular materials about Indian tribes into their social studies curricula.

**Summary of First Substitute Bill:** School districts are required to incorporate curricula about the nearest federally recognized Indian tribe or tribes into their social studies curricula no later than September 1, 2026.

OSPI is directed to assist school districts in identifying federally recognized Indian tribes whose reservations or traditional lands are within or nearby the district. OSPI is also directed to collaborate with tribes that may have unique consultation challenges, such as consulting with a large number of districts.

Beginning in the 2026-27 school year, the State Board of Education (SBE), in coordination with the Office of Native Education, is directed to implement a system of annual monitoring and evaluations of district compliance with these curricular requirements. This monitoring must include information from each school district about the grade levels in which the curriculum is implemented and taught, collaborations with federally recognized tribes, the availability of professional development, summaries of the implementation process, courses for which credit may be awarded, and the number of enrolled students in courses for which credit may be awarded. SBE must report these findings to the Legislature annually, beginning in 2027. These requirements expire September 1, 2029.

By September 1, 2026, OSPI is directed to report to the Legislature concerning:

- compensating federally recognized Indian tribes who provide expertise, consultation, or collaboration on curricular matters;
- retroactively compensating federally recognized Indian tribes who have previously provided expertise, consultation, or collaboration on curricular matters; and
- evaluation and accountability metrics for implementing the curriculum and government-to-government consultation.

**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 on Original Bill (Early Learning & K-12 Education):** PRO: Washington is blessed with a diversity of 29 federally recognized tribes and this work creates knowledge that is much more detailed and accurate than any history book. This bill creates accountability, reduces the perception that this requirement is optional, and responds to a tribal request made during the Centennial Accords.

This education is enriching and important for all students. Native students become more engaged with their culture when it is a part of their school day. Some Native students are raised by non-Native family away from community, and school may be their only exposure to Native culture. All students benefit from the gift of these stories, and histories. There is no better way to learn civics than learning about precontact and postcontact history.

The reporting and compensation elements of the bill are important for durability and for recognizing the significant contributions that tribes have made to this curriculum. Expanding the consultation to tribes whose traditional lands and territories included parts of Washington State is realistic and responsive to the close relationships between tribal communities.

Work done so far has been successful, and the Office of Native Education is prepared to implement this bill.

**Persons Testifying (Early Learning & K-12 Education):** PRO: Senator Claudia Kauffman, Prime Sponsor; Henry Strom, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction; Lisa Ganuelas, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation; Matt Remle, Lakota, Marysville School District Native Education Department Program Supervisor; Monica Tonasket, Spokane Tribe of Indians; Shana Brown; Kristi Dominguez, Ed.D., Superintendent, Ferndale School District; Chairman Leonard Forsman, The Suquamish Tribe; Else Washines, Washington State Native American Education Advisory Committee – Tribal East Representative; Councilwoman Charlene Tillequots, Yakama Nation Tribal Council; Bernard Koontz, Highline Public Schools; Karen Condon, Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation; Cyrus James, Children of the Setting Sun Productions; Natalia Jefferson, K12 Student; Channele Bill-Kinley, K12 Student; Santana Rabang, Children of the Setting Sun Productions.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Early Learning & K-12 Education):**  
No one.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill (Ways & Means):** *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* PRO: Our students deserve this history lesson about the culture and essence that Native Americans and governments played in shaping Washington as it is today. It will lead to a better understanding of one another and to the community values for all of us. It is time to address this lack of education and to once again direct public schools to work with the neighboring tribal governments together so we can educate our children together. This bill offers an

opportunity to establish stronger accountability measures for school districts ensuring they are utilizing the Since Time Immemorial curriculum and also implementing localized curriculum consulting with tribes. Migratory ways of life should be highlighted in two sections of the bill. Native students are eligible for participation in migratory education support; however, there is much to be done in recruitment and retention of Native student enrollment and participation. Native students are underrepresented, misidentified and missing from any meaningful participation in this program and by addressing this issue in the implementation of the curriculum, Native students will begin to acknowledge their unique ways of life.

**Persons Testifying (Ways & Means):** PRO: Council Charlene Tillaquots, Yakama Nation Tribal Council; Karen Condon, Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation; Patricia Whitefoot.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Ways & Means):** No one.