

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5973

As of February 19, 2009

Title: An act relating to closing the achievement gap in order to provide all students an excellent and equitable education.

Brief Description: Closing the achievement gap in order to provide all students an excellent and equitable education.

Sponsors: Senators Kauffman, McAuliffe, Oemig, Shin, Hobbs, Kohl-Welles and Kline.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/19/09.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Juliana Roe (786-7438)

Background: The 2008 Legislature commissioned five studies, by way of 2SHB 2722 (2008), and four provisos in the 2008 supplemental operating budget, that analyzed the differences in academic achievement and educational outcomes among various subgroups of students. These differences are referred to as the achievement gap. The commissioned studies drew from research, best practices, and personal, professional, and cultural experiences and came up with various recommendations to close the achievement gap.

Summary of Bill: The bill as referred to committee not considered.

Summary of Bill (Proposed Substitute): The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) must work in collaboration with members of the five achievement gap groups to review the commissioned achievement gap reports and develop a plan to implement and address the achievement gaps. OSPI must provide clear benchmarks to be achieved. The plan must be provided to the Legislature by December 2009.

OSPI must disaggregate all student data-related reports by at least the following subgroups of students: White, Black, Hispanic, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, Pacific Islander/Hawaiian Native, low income, transitional bilingual, migrant, special education, and students covered by section 504 of the federal rehabilitation act of 1973.

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.

The Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) must convene a work group to develop standards for cultural competency.

PESB must provide school districts assistance where data indicates achievement gaps. The purpose of the assistance is to develop grant programs between the districts and teacher preparation programs to provide one or more of the four alternative route programs and recruit paraeducators and community members to become certified as teachers. PESB must coordinate the program for recruiting teachers with the alternative route programs.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 11, 2009.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This bill is a result of many hours of hard work. It reflects meaningful steps that we hope to move forward this session. It remains a work in progress. But the intent of the bill is to work toward bridging the achievement gaps. One important goal is to disaggregate all of the data that is currently collected. We also want to continue the workgroup that has been established.

It is no secret that Washington State is facing a difficult economic climate, but there is not shortage of will. There is a will to move forward and effectively and efficiently address the achievement gap. It is important to continue the momentum of the work that was conducted this summer.

There is still support for the original version of the bill.

OSPI might be a better place to work on the achievement gap because OSPI has already been doing work in this area.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Kauffman, prime sponsor; Vicki Austin, Mona Bailey, Black Education Strategy Roundtable; Sam Chandler, OSPI; Brad Burnham, Washington State Board of Education; Christie Perkins, Washington State Special Education Coalition.