
SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5973

State of Washington

61st Legislature

2009 Regular Session

By Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators Kauffman, McAuliffe, Oemig, Shin, Hobbs, Kohl-Welles, and Kline)

READ FIRST TIME 02/25/09.

1 AN ACT Relating to closing the achievement gap in order to provide
2 all students an excellent and equitable education; amending RCW
3 28A.300.137; adding a new section to chapter 28A.300 RCW; adding a new
4 section to chapter 28A.410 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 28A.660
5 RCW; and creating a new section.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds compelling
8 evidence from five commissioned studies that additional progress must
9 be made to address the achievement gap. The studies also contain
10 specific recommendations for action by the legislature, colleges of
11 education, school leadership, teachers, and communities. These
12 recommendations are data-driven and drawn from education research, as
13 well as the personal, professional, and cultural experience of those
14 who contributed to the studies. The legislature finds there is no
15 better opportunity to make a strong commitment to closing the
16 achievement gap than in legislation affirming the state's
17 constitutional obligation to provide opportunities to learn for all
18 students without distinction or preference on account of race,
19 ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or gender.

1 (2) Therefore, following the priority recommendations from the
2 achievement gap studies, the legislature intends to:

3 (a) Provide resources to support parent and community involvement
4 and outreach efforts by public schools, including such items as
5 additional notices and communication to parents, translations,
6 translators, parent and community meetings, and school events within
7 the community;

8 (b) Require that teachers demonstrate cultural competency in the
9 classroom and with students at each level of state teacher
10 certification and provide additional opportunities for professional
11 development in cultural competency for current teachers;

12 (c) Create local alternative routes to teacher certification for
13 paraeducators and individuals in the communities surrounding schools
14 and school districts that are struggling to address the achievement
15 gap; and

16 (d) Reexamine the study recommendations regarding data and
17 accountability and identify ways for the education data accountability
18 system to address these needs.

19 (3) The legislature encourages school districts to consult with the
20 office of the education ombudsman in developing plans for parent and
21 community involvement and outreach.

22 (4) Comprehensive and consistent collection and review of data, by
23 the superintendent of public instruction, that is disaggregated in the
24 smallest units allowable by law that do not identify an individual
25 student is an important factor in closing the achievement gap. This
26 disaggregation of information is important to compile in order to see
27 exactly where each subgroup lies. Establishing a single, streamlined
28 discipline data collection system will reduce the administrative burden
29 on schools and districts.

30 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.300
31 RCW to read as follows:

32 All student data related reports required of the superintendent of
33 public instruction in this title must be disaggregated by at least the
34 following subgroups of students: White, Black, Hispanic, American
35 Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, Pacific Islander/Hawaiian Native, low
36 income, transitional bilingual, migrant, special education, and

1 students covered by section 504 of the federal rehabilitation act of
2 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. Sec. 794).

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.410
4 RCW to read as follows:

5 The professional educator standards board shall convene a working
6 group with expertise in a wide array of cultures and cultural contexts
7 to identify a list of model standards for cultural competency and make
8 recommendations to the education committees of the legislature on the
9 strengths and weaknesses of those standards. For the purposes of this
10 section, "cultural competency" includes knowledge of student cultural
11 histories and contexts, as well as family norms and values in different
12 cultures; knowledge and skills in accessing community resources and
13 community and parent outreach; and skills in adapting instruction to
14 students' experiences and identifying cultural contexts for individual
15 students.

16 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.660
17 RCW to read as follows:

18 The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall
19 provide guidance to school districts where data indicates significant
20 achievement gaps among subgroups of students and for large numbers of
21 those students. The office of the superintendent of public instruction
22 is responsible for identifying the school districts that have the
23 largest achievement gap and should receive priority for assistance in
24 advancing cultural competence skills in their workforce. The
25 guidelines shall also take into consideration the recommendations of
26 the achievement gap task force report to the 2009 legislature. The
27 purpose of the assistance is to develop partnership grant programs
28 between the districts and teacher preparation programs to provide one
29 or more of the four alternative route programs under RCW 28A.660.040
30 and recruit paraeducators and other individuals in the local community
31 to become certified as teachers. To the maximum extent possible, the
32 board shall coordinate the recruiting Washington teachers program under
33 RCW 28A.415.370 with the alternative route programs under this
34 subsection.

1 **Sec. 5.** RCW 28A.300.137 and 2008 c 298 s 3 are each amended to
2 read as follows:

3 (~~Beginning~~) (1) The center shall work in collaboration with the
4 commissions established under chapters 43.113, 43.115, and 43.117 RCW
5 and representatives from the five achievement gap study groups
6 commissioned in 2008 to review the challenges and solutions addressed
7 by the five achievement gap study group's reports and develop a plan
8 for implementation of strategies intended to address the achievement
9 gap. The implementation plan must establish clear benchmarks that are
10 to be achieved.

11 (2) In January 2010, the center for the improvement of student
12 learning shall report (~~annually~~) to the superintendent of public
13 instruction, the state board of education, the governor, the P-20
14 council, and the education committees of the legislature on the
15 implementation plan required under subsection (1) of this section and
16 shall, thereafter, annually report on the implementation status of
17 strategies to address the achievement gap (~~for African-American~~
18 students)) and on the progress in improvement of education performance
19 measures for African-American, Hispanic, American Indian/Alaskan
20 Native, Asian, and Pacific Islander/Hawaiian Native students.

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