

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1541

As Reported by House Committee On: Education

Title: An act relating to implementing strategies to close the educational opportunity gap, based on the recommendations of the educational opportunity gap oversight and accountability committee.

Brief Description: Implementing strategies to close the educational opportunity gap, based on the recommendations of the educational opportunity gap oversight and accountability committee.

Sponsors: Representatives Santos, Ortiz-Self, Tharinger, Moscoso, Orwall and Gregerson.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/10/15, 2/17/15 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Prohibits long-term suspension or expulsion as a form of discretionary discipline, limits all suspension or expulsion to one term, and requires a reengagement meeting that includes the student's family.
- Removes certain discretionary violations from those that may result in suspension or expulsion.
- Requires districts to adopt discipline policies and procedures and annually train staff on the policies and procedures.
- Requires the Education Research and Data Center to prepare a regular report on the educational and workforce outcomes of youth in the juvenile justice system.
- Requires development of cultural competence training for all school staff.
- Expands a conditional teacher scholarship program to include teachers seeking endorsements in Special Education, Bilingual Education, or English Language Learner (ELL).
- Requires that teachers assigned to the Transitional Bilingual Instructional Program (TBIP) be endorsed in Bilingual Education or ELL beginning in 2019-20.

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.

- Requires collection of student data disaggregated by sub-racial and sub-ethnic categories, to be phased in beginning in 2017-18.
- Requires posting of certain data related to the number of teachers of color and their average length of service.
- Creates the Washington Integrated Student Services (ISS) program to support a school-based approach to promoting the success of students by coordinating academic and nonacademic supports.
- Requires the Office of the Superintendent of Public instruction to create a work group to determine how to implement the Washington ISS program and report to the Legislature by October 1, 2015 and 2016.
- Requires the Department of Early Learning to create a community information and involvement plan to inform early learning providers of the Early Achievers program.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 15 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Ortiz-Self, Vice Chair; Reykdal, Vice Chair; Magendanz, Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Caldier, Fagan, Gregory, Griffey, S. Hunt, Kilduff, Lytton, Orwall, Pollet and Springer.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Hargrove, Hayes, Klippert and McCaslin.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Muri, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Stambaugh, Assistant Ranking Minority Member.

Staff: Megan Wargacki (786-7194).

Background:

Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee.

In 2009 the Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee (EOGOAC) was established to recommend policies and strategies to close the achievement gap. The EOGOAC has six legislative members, representatives of the Office of Education Ombuds and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), and five members representing the state ethnic commissions and federally recognized tribes.

In its 2015 report to the Legislature, the EOGOAC made the following recommendations:

- reduce the length of time students of color are excluded from school due to suspension and expulsion and provide students support for reengagement plans;
- enhance the cultural competence of current and future educators and classified staff;
- endorse all educators in English Language Learner (ELL) and second language acquisition;

- account for the Transitional Bilingual Instruction Program (TBIP) instructional services provided to ELL students;
- analyze the opportunity gap through deeper disaggregation of student demographic data;
- invest in the recruitment, hiring, and retention of educators of color;
- incorporate integrated student services and family engagement; and
- strengthen student transitions.

Student Discipline.

Each school district board of directors is required to adopt written policies regarding student conduct and discipline. The OSPI must adopt rules for providing due-process rights to students who are subject to disciplinary actions. Disciplinary actions made at the discretion of the school district must be in compliance with district policies and state laws and rules. Long-term suspension is defined as more than 10 days.

Legislation enacted in 2013 made the following changes to the laws regarding student discipline:

- required collection of disaggregated data through the student data system on nine categories of student behavior, seven categories of interventions, and the number of days of suspension or expulsion;
- required a Discipline Task Force to be convened by the OSPI to develop standard definitions for the data collected at the discretion of the school districts;
- prohibited indefinite suspensions or expulsions and requiring an end date of no more than one year, with a petition process to exceed the one-year limitation for reasons of public health or safety; and
- required districts to create an individualized reengagement plan for students returning to their school program.

Cultural Competence.

Legislation enacted in 2009 directed the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) to incorporate standards for cultural competence into each level of teacher certification. Cultural competence is defined as: (1) knowledge of students' cultural histories and contexts; (2) knowledge and skills in accessing community resources and community and parent outreach; and (3) skills in adapting instruction to students' experiences and identifying cultural contexts for individual students.

Application of knowledge about students' cultural development and a commitment to closing the achievement gap are among the criteria for evaluating teacher and principal performance under revised evaluation systems. The OSPI must design a professional development program to support implementation of the revised evaluation systems.

ELL Instruction.

The state allocates additional funding for the TBIP to provide additional support for ELL students to gain English language proficiency.

In 2007 the Retooling to Teach Mathematics and Science (Retooling) program was established to provide a conditional scholarship to encourage current teachers to obtain an additional endorsement in middle or secondary mathematics or science.

ELL Accountability.

Under federal accountability rules, states, and school districts must report the following data for ELL instructional programs:

- students making progress in learning English;
- students attaining language proficiency and exiting the TBIP; and
- student performance on state academic assessments.

Disaggregated Data.

The OSPI collects student data on race and ethnicity through the statewide student data system. The K-12 Data Governance Group oversees data collection protocols and standards and provides guidance for school districts. Federal race and ethnicity reporting guidelines require, at a minimum, reporting of student race as White, African American/Black, Asian, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and then a separate reporting of ethnicity as Hispanic or non-Hispanic. The data system also contains 57 different racial subcategories and nine ethnic subcategories, but school districts are not required to report at this level of disaggregation.

During the 2010-11 school year, the OSPI reduced the number of students that must be in a subgroup before data on the subgroup may be publically displayed from 30 to 20. The United States Department of Education (ED) reported in 2012, that some states are reporting data for subgroups as small as five students.

Recruitment and Retention.

About five percent of teachers leave the workforce each year. The Recruiting Washington Teachers program was established in 2007 to recruit and provide training and support for high school students to enter the teaching profession, especially in teacher shortage areas and among underrepresented groups and multilingual, multicultural students.

The demographics of the student population in Washington public schools has changed over the past decade to include more students of color. The demographics of educators has not changed at the same rate as that of students.

Integrated Student Services and Family Engagement.

Integrated student supports (ISS) is an educational reform that is being implemented across the country. The ISS model is a school-based approach that promotes the academic success of at-risk students by coordinating academic and nonacademic supports to reduce barriers to success. These academic and nonacademic resources include: tutoring and mentoring; physical and mental health care; and connecting families to parent education, family counseling, food banks, and employment assistance. Reports suggest that providing ISS can impact students' academic achievement and their behavior.

The Learning Assistance Program (LAP) provides instructional support for students who are performing below grade level in reading, writing, and mathematics. School districts must submit an annual plan that identifies the activities to be conducted and the expenditure of funds under the LAP. The plan is required to have a number of specified elements and must be approved by the OSPI.

Transitions.

In 2007 the quality rating and improvement system for the early care and education system in Washington, called the Early Achievers (EA) program, was created. The EA program establishes a common set of expectations and standards that define, measure, and improve the quality of early learning and care settings. The Department of Early Learning (DEL) completed statewide implementation of the EA program in July 2013. As of December 2014, 2,266 licensed providers are participating in the EA program.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Student Discipline.

Suspension or expulsion must be limited to a semester or quarter. School districts may not exclude students from school for discretionary disciplinary actions, rather the district must provide educational services in an alternative manner. Possession of a telecommunication device and violation of dress and grooming codes are removed from the list of disciplinary violations that, if performed two or more times within a three-year period, may result in long-term suspension or expulsion. After a student is suspended or expelled, the districts must, rather than should, convene a reengagement meeting with the student and family. Families must be able to participate in a culturally sensitive and culturally responsive reengagement plan.

The Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA) must create and publically post model school district discipline policies and procedures. The districts must adopt policies and procedures consistent with the model policy, and disseminate to the community any changes to discipline policies. The OSPI must annually train school and district staff on the discipline policies and procedures.

The Education Data and Research Center (ERDC) must prepare a regular report on the educational and workforce outcomes of youth in the juvenile justice system. To enable this data collection, a provision in the Administrative Office of the Courts statute is modified to allow research data to be shared with the ERDC.

Cultural Competence.

Professional development programs to support evaluation systems must be aligned to cultural competence standards, focus on multicultural education and principals of English language acquisition, and include best practices to implement the tribal history and culture curriculum. Schools that are required to implement a plan for improvement must provide the cultural competence training for all staff.

Training on the foundational elements of cultural competence must be developed by the OSPI for administrators and school staff, and by the WSSDA for school board directors and superintendents.

ELL Instruction.

The types of endorsements teachers and certain certificated elementary educators may pursue to qualify for the Retooling program must include special education, bilingual education, or

ELL, in addition to math and science. Preference must be given to teachers assigned to a school implementing a plan for improvement and teachers assigned to schools with growing populations of ELL, when awarding scholarships in bilingual education or ELL endorsements.

All teachers in the TBIP must hold an endorsement in bilingual education or ELL by the 2019-20 school year.

ELL Accountability.

The Legislature is no longer required to approve and fund the TBIP evaluations before the program can be implemented. The OSPI must provide districts with assistance and support related to the TBIP. The OSPI must also identify schools that have experienced a significant increase in ELL students, so that the district can provide training to these schools.

Disaggregated Data.

The OSPI must collect and school districts must submit student data using federal race and ethnicity guidelines, including sub-racial and sub-ethnic categories, with the following additions:

- further disaggregation of the African American/Black category and Asian category;
- further disaggregation of the White category to include Eastern European nationalities with significant populations in Washington; and
- reporting of students by their discrete racial categories if they report as multi-racial.

This data must be collected beginning in the 2017-18 school year for students who newly enroll, transfer, or change schools within a district. The K-12 Data Governance Group must develop protocols and guidance for this data collection, and the OSPI must incorporate training on best practices for collecting data on racial and ethnic categories into other data-related training.

The OSPI must convene a task force to review the ED guidelines to clarify why collection of race and ethnicity data is important and how students and families can help administrators properly identify them. The OSPI must adopt a rule that the only student data that should not be reported for public reporting and accountability is data where the school or district has fewer than 10 students in a grade level or student subgroup.

Recruitment and Retention.

The PESB and the OSPI must convene a work group to: revise the career and technical education courses related to Careers in Education to incorporate the cultural competence standards adopted by the PESB; reflect new research on educator preparation and development; and incorporate the Recruiting Washington Teachers Program curriculum and activities.

The OSPI must, to the extent data is available, post on the Internet the percentage of classroom teachers of color per school district and per school, and the average length of service of classroom teachers of color per district and per school.

Integrated Student Services and Family Engagement.

The Washington ISS program at the OSPI is created. The purposes of the program include:

- supporting a school-based approach to promoting the success of all students by coordinating academic and nonacademic supports to reduce barriers to academic achievement and educational attainment;
- fulfilling a vision of public education where educators focus on education, students focus on learning, and auxiliary supports enable teaching and learning to occur unimpeded;
- encouraging the creation, expansion, and quality improvement of community-based supports that can be integrated into the academic environment of schools and school districts;
- increasing public awareness of the evidence showing that academic outcomes are a result of both academic and nonacademic factors; and
- supporting statewide and local organizations in their efforts to provide leadership, coordination, technical assistance, professional development, and advocacy to implement high-quality, evidence-based, student-centered, coordinated approaches throughout the state.

A framework is provided for the program, including needs assessments, integration and coordination, community partnerships, and a requirement that the program be data driven. The framework must facilitate the ability of any academic or nonacademic provider to support the needs of at-risk students, including: mental health counselors; social emotional learning experts; physicians; dentists; speech therapists; and audiologists. The OSPI must create a work group, with certain membership requirements, to determine how to best implement the framework and report to the Legislature by October 1, 2015 and 2016.

The ISS programs and service are added to the list of services and activities that may be supported by the LAP. The requirement that expenditure of funds from the LAP be consistent with certain academic achievement and accountability provisions is removed. Rather than the OSPI approving community-based organizations or local agencies before the LAP funds are expended, the school board must do this in an open meeting. The provision allowing the LAP funds to be used to reduce disruptive behaviors in the classroom is removed.

Transitions.

The DEL must collaborate with the OSPI to create a community information and involvement plan to inform home-based, tribal, and family early learning providers of the EA program.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

Student Discipline.

Suspension or expulsion must be limited to a semester or quarter. Possession of a telecommunication device and violation of dress and grooming codes are removed from the list of disciplinary violations that, if performed two or more times within a 3-year period, may result in long-term suspension or expulsion. After a student is suspended or expelled, the districts must, rather than should, convene a reengagement meeting with the student and family. Families must be able to participate in a culturally sensitive and culturally responsive reengagement plan.

The WSSDA must create and publically post model school district discipline policies and procedures. The districts must adopt policies and procedures consistent with the model policy, and disseminate to the community any changes to discipline policies. The OSPI must annually train school and district staff on the discipline policies and procedures.

To enable the data collection by the ERDC, a provision in the Administrative Office of the Courts statute is modified to allow research data to be shared with the ERDC.

ELL Instruction.

The requirement that the OSPI convene an ELL Accountability Task Force is removed.

ELL Accountability.

The Legislature is no longer required to approve and fund TBIP evaluations before the program can be implemented. The OSPI must provide districts with assistance and support related to the TBIP. The OSPI must also identify schools that have experienced a significant increase in ELL students, so that the district can provide training to these schools.

Disaggregated Data.

The OSPI must convene a task force to review the ED guidelines to clarify why collection of race and ethnicity data is important and how students and families can help administrators properly identify them. The OSPI must adopt a rule that the only student data that should not be reported for public reporting and accountability is data where the school or district has fewer than 10 students in a grade level or student subgroup.

Recruitment and Retention.

The OSPI must, to the extent data is available, post on the internet the percentage of classroom teachers of color per school district and per school, and the average length of service of classroom teachers of color per district and per school.

The requirements that the PESB to convene a work group to design an articulated pathway for teacher preparation and certification for paraeducators and the requirement that apprenticeship programs or certificate programs for paraeducators provide transferable credit are removed.

Integrated Student Services and Family Engagement.

These sections are added.

Transitions.

These sections are added.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 18, 2015.

Effective Date of Substitute 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) This bill mirrors the annual recommendations of the EOGOAC. Closing the opportunity gap is a moral imperative and a civil rights obligation. It is the right thing to do for each child that enters our schools. These measures must be adopted. The bill addresses a variety of issues in a holistic way. The status quo for discipline in Washington is in violation of the civil rights laws. Statistics show illegal discrimination against students of color. Prohibiting schools from excluding students for discretionary discipline is critical to helping students. The OSPI must do trainings on discipline to tell schools what they can do and about best practices that work.

Asian Americans are 8 percent of the public school population, but this includes 46 ethnicities. There are large concentration of Southeast Asian Americans, but racial data on these groups is lumped with data for other Asians. This means that these students essentially do not count. Many Southeast Asian American groups have lower success rates than other Asians, so it is important to separate them out in the data to understand their unique needs. Around 49 percent of Asian Americans have a bachelor's degree, but many subgroups of Asians do not feel that this statistic reflects their experience. The dropout rate for Filipino students is higher than for other students. The state needs to look at all the components so that our students do not face barriers and have equitable access.

Many students drop out of high school because they do not think it is possible to go on to higher education. If teachers better understand their students and give them support, this will help students stay in school and be successful in college. This bill will recruit and retain educators of color and educate them in cultural competence. Many teachers today do not have a cultural understanding and are not of color. It is important for students to see themselves in their teachers and be able to identify with teachers. The bill will close the educational opportunity gap. The transition for ELL students is difficult. The regular teachers are not as culturally equipped, which prevents students from expressing themselves as freely as they would otherwise. Many immigrants students come to kindergarten unprepared and often get left behind their peers.

(In support with concerns) In section 103 of the original bill, the Washington State School Directors' Association must create model policy. The school districts should also be required to adopt this model. There are some other technical problems with the bill. In section 203 of the bill, there is not enough time for the community and technical colleges to make this happen. Additional time needs to be provided.

(With concerns) All students need to be included in the bill, including students with disabilities. If these students are not included, this bill would continue to promulgate inequitable practices.

(Opposed) Trying to do this kind of overreach does not usually work very well. The state needs a bill on student data privacy before it adds additional data collection requirements. There are a list of educational agencies in the bill that must share data, but the Charter School Commission is left out.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Sally Brownfield, Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee; Linda Mangel, American Civil Liberties Union; Ay Saechao, and Tony Vo, South East Asian Education Coalition; Velma Veloria, Coalition of Immigrants and Refugees of Communities of Color; Frank Duong; Dain Yoshizumi; Annie Yoshizumi; and Pat Montgomery.

(In support with concerns) Kathy Gabel, State Board of Community and Technical Colleges; and Jerry Bender, Association of Washington School Principals.

(With concerns) Lynn Tucker, Parent Teacher Association.

(Opposed) Melissa Westbrook, Seattle Schools Community Forum.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None