
Education Committee

HB 2722

Brief Description: Creating an advisory committee to address the achievement gap for African-American students.

Sponsors: Representatives Pettigrew, Kenney, Morris, Sullivan, Hasegawa, Upthegrove, Loomis, Pedersen, Darneille, Conway, Hudgins, Quall, Ericks, Kagi and Ormsby.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Directs the Center for the Improvement of Student Learning to convene an advisory committee to create a strategic plan for addressing the achievement gap for African American students.
- Requires an interim report by December 2008 and a final report by December 2009.
- Requires an annual report beginning in 2011 on the implementation of strategies and the improvement in educational performance measures established by the plan.

Hearing Date: 2/1/08

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

Results for the 2007 high school Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) show that 80.8 percent of 10th grade students met standard in reading, 83.9 percent met standard in writing, and 50.4 percent met standard in mathematics. However, there are disproportionate levels of achievement among groups of students. The gap in WASL scores between non-Asian minority students and white students in reading is approximately 20 percentage points. The gap in mathematics is between 20 and 30 percentage points. African American high school students are lagging behind other student groups in both reading and mathematics WASL scores. Approximately 25 percent of African American students drop out of school between 9th and 12th grade, compared to 17 percent of white students.

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.

In 2006, the Black Education Strategy Roundtable (Roundtable), an informal advisory group convened by the Washington Commission on African American Affairs, convened community forums and developed a set of recommendations for education policy makers which included:

1. a statewide strategic plan to close the racial opportunity and achievement gap;
2. a public-private partnership to fund and operate local family engagement and empowerment activities and capacity building institutes for families;
3. a public-private partnership for additional community-based supplemental education for Black youth; and
4. a funding and policy package to increase school funding and fundamentally redesign the school day, curriculum, and instructional practices to meet the needs and learning styles of students not meeting state standards.

The mission of the Center for the Improvement of Student Learning (CISL) is to serve as a clearinghouse for information, promising practices, and research that promotes and supports effective learning environments for all students, especially those in underserved communities. Another aspect of the CISL's mandate is to promote and facilitate family, school, and community partnerships around the state. The CISL is housed within the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Summary of Bill:

The CISL must convene an advisory committee to craft a strategic plan to address the achievement gap for African American students. The advisory committee is comprised of 15 members, including educators, parents, and representatives of community-based organizations, the Commission on African American Affairs, and Office of the Education Ombudsman. Five members each are appointed by the Speaker of the House and the Secretary of the Senate, and the remaining members are appointed by the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI).

The duties of the advisory committee are to conduct a detailed analysis of the achievement gap for African American students; examine the extent that current initiatives address the needs of African American students; identify best practices and promising programs; craft a strategic plan with school and community-based strategies and funding to improve educational outcomes for African American students; and develop performance improvement measures and benchmarks to monitor progress.

The Washington State Institute for Public Policy must assist the advisory committee in examining detailed data on achievement indicators and trends. The advisory committee must include recommendations to implement suggestions from the Roundtable regarding family engagement and empowerment activities and community-based supplemental education.

An interim report is due December 1, 2008, and a final report is due December 1, 2009, to the SPI, the Governor, and the education committees of the Legislature.

Beginning in January 2011, the CISL reports annually on the implementation of strategies to address the achievement gap for African American students and on the progress of improvement of education performance measures for African American students.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 22, 2008.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.