

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## E2SSB 5528

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As Passed Senate, March 12, 2007

**Title:** An act relating to mathematics education.

**Brief Description:** Requiring a review of the essential academic learning requirements in mathematics.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Pflug, Holmquist, Zarelli, Swecker, Clements, Stevens, Roach, Hewitt, Delvin and Parlette).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/05/07, 2/22/07 [DPS-WM].  
Ways & Means: 2/26/07, 3/05/07 [DP2S, w/oRec].  
Passed Senate: 3/12/07, 48-0.

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

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5528 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Tom, Vice Chair; Holmquist, Ranking Minority Member; Brandland, Clements, Eide, Hewitt, Hobbs, Kauffman, Oemig, Rasmussen, Weinstein and Zarelli.

**Staff:** Susan Mielke (786-7422)

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

**Majority Report:** That Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 5528 be substituted therefor, and the second substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Prentice, Chair; Fraser, Vice Chair, Capital Budget Chair; Zarelli, Ranking Minority Member; Brandland, Carrell, Fairley, Hatfield, Hewitt, Hobbs, Honeyford, Keiser, Kohl-Welles, Oemig, Parlette, Rasmussen, Regala, Roach, Rockefeller and Schoesler.

**Minority Report:** That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Pridemore, Vice Chair, Operating Budget.

**Staff:** Bryon Moore (786-7726)

**Background:** In 1993, the Legislature directed the Commission on Student Learning (Commission) to develop the Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs), which describe what students should know and be able to do in eight content areas, including

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mathematics. The EALRs in mathematics were initially adopted in 1995 and revised in 1997. The Commission also established performance benchmarks in all the content areas at three grade levels: grades four, seven, and ten. The Commission completed its work in 1999 and was dissolved. Current law requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to periodically review the EALRs.

In 2002, the SPI began development of Grade Level Expectations (GLE) for grades kindergarten through ten. SPI released a refined version of the mathematics GLEs in September 2006.

As part of the Joint Mathematics Action Plan, the State Board of Education (SBE) will be contracting with a national consultant to conduct a review of the mathematics EALRs to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the current standards. The consultant will also recommend an appropriate methodology to benchmark Washington's students' mathematics performance to international standards. The consultant will work with a panel of mathematics teachers, district and building curriculum leaders, higher education faculty, parents, and business and community leaders. Depending upon funding, the consultant will also work with additional experts. A final report with recommendations is due by June 15, 2007, to the SBE and SPI.

**Summary of Engrossed Second Substitute Bill:** By September 2007, the SBE will recommend to SPI revised EALRs and GLEs based on specified considerations. The SBE will be aided by an expert consultant retained by the SBE and a mathematics advisory panel comprised of at least 13 thirteen members. The panel is appointed by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House from list of names submitted by the caucuses. The panel must have representatives from academia, business and industry, and educators in mathematics or science-related fields. Additionally, there must be at least one parent, and at most two persons with specialized experience. The panelists must have no conflicts of interests, and are compensated and reimbursed for travel expenses. School districts must be reimbursed for the cost of substitutes for the educators on the panel and those employed by public institutions of higher education must be provided time away from regular duties without loss of benefits and privileges.

By January 2008, the SPI must revise the EARLS and GLEs and present them to the SBE and the legislative education committees. SPI must adopt the revisions unless otherwise advised by the Legislature in the 2008 session.

By May 2008, the SPI must present to the SBE no more than three mathematics curricula with appropriate diagnostic and supplemental materials, for each elementary, middle, and high school grade spans that align with the revised EALRs and GLEs. The SBE must provide official comments to the SPI on the recommended mathematics curricula and SPI must seek advice on the curricula from the mathematics advisory panel. Subject to appropriations, at least one of the curricula in each grade span must be available to schools and parents on-line at no cost to the school or parent.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Proposed Substitute (Early Learning & K-12 Education):** PRO: A key point of the bill is that the review committee must be truly independent. We need a review for many reasons: our state math standards and assessment has gotten failing grades by the Fordam Foundation; and too many students must take remedial classes, usually in math. The core foundation of a math curriculum must be in computation fluency and that means drills. Inquiry learning is not enough alone. Computation is not enough along. There needs to be a balanced, comprehensive approach with clear examples and explanations. We need to have fewer topics covered in math, instead of being a mile wide and an inch deep. We need to require mastery in a topic before moving the student on. Standards alone won't get us there. The curriculum must be aligned to the standards.

OTHER: The State Board of Education is currently putting together an independent panel with Washington and national experts. The board would be happy to use the study criteria provided in the bill. The board plans to have something for the Legislature by next winter. There needs to be an independent review, which means it should not include the SPI because they are the ones that created the problems. Also, we don't want to create another bureaucracy with another commission. We do have a concern about the limited menu of curricula because we need to ensure that means more than one in order to be a menu.

**Persons Testifying (Early Learning & K-12 Education):** PRO: Senator Pflug, prime sponsor; Bob Brandt, Where's the Math; Mickey Lahmann, Office of SPI; Julie Wright, Where's the Math.

OTHER: Edie Harding, SBE; Sharon Hanek; Dan Steele, Washington State School Directors' Association.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Ways & Means):** PRO: A key point of the bill is that the review committee must be truly independent. While we need to be cognizant of cost of this measure, the cost of standards and curriculum that is not appropriate is much greater. This independent review needs to get conducted to better align math and science standards and curriculum. This is a vital part of improving math and science instruction. This will build off of what is already occurring with Gates' Foundation funding.

**Persons Testifying (Ways & Means):** PRO: Senator Pflug, prime sponsor; Bob Brandt, Where's the Math; Julie Wright, Where's the Math/Washington State Parent Teacher Association.