
HOUSE BILL 2722

State of Washington

60th Legislature

2008 Regular Session

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

Read first time 01/16/08. Referred to Committee on Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to addressing the achievement gap for African-
2 American students; adding a new section to chapter 28A.300 RCW; and
3 creating new sections.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that of all the
6 challenges confronting the African-American community, perhaps none is
7 more critical to the future than the education of African-American
8 children. The data regarding inequities, disproportionality, and gaps
9 in achievement is alarming no matter which indicators are used:

10 (a) The gap in reading test scores between African-American and
11 white students on the tenth grade Washington assessment of student
12 learning is twenty percentage points, with only two-thirds of African-
13 American students able to meet the upcoming graduation standard in
14 reading on the first attempt compared to eighty-five percent of white
15 students. African-American students are lagging behind other student
16 groups in reading improvement.

17 (b) African-American students continue to score lowest among
18 student groups in high school mathematics, with only twenty-three

1 percent able to meet state standard on the first attempt, a thirty-
2 three percentage point lag behind white students who have a fifty-six
3 percent met-standard rate.

4 (c) One-fourth of African-American students who enter ninth grade
5 will have dropped out of school by the time their peers graduate in
6 twelfth grade. This measure does not account for the children who,
7 facing significant educational challenges and barriers, have already
8 grown disparaged before the end of middle or junior high school.

9 (2) The legislature further finds that although there are multiple
10 initiatives broadly intended to improve student achievement, including
11 a small number of initiatives to address the achievement gap for
12 disadvantaged students generally, there are only a select few efforts
13 targeted to the challenges of African-American students or designed
14 specifically to engage parents and leaders in the African-American
15 community. The efficacy of general supplemental programs in helping
16 African-American students is unknown. A thoughtful, comprehensive, and
17 inclusive strategy for African-American students has not been created.

18 (3) Therefore, the legislature intends to commission and then
19 implement a clear, concise, and intentional plan of action, with
20 specific strategies and performance benchmarks, to ensure that African-
21 American students meet or exceed all academic standards and are
22 prepared for a quality life and responsible citizenship in the twenty-
23 first century.

24 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The center for the improvement of
25 student learning in the office of the superintendent of public
26 instruction shall convene an advisory committee to craft a strategic
27 plan to address the achievement gap for African-American students.

28 (a) The advisory committee shall be comprised of fifteen members
29 including educators, parents, representatives of community-based
30 organizations, a representative from the Washington state commission on
31 African-American affairs, and a representative from the office of the
32 education ombudsman. Five members shall be appointed by the speaker of
33 the house of representatives; five members shall be appointed by the
34 secretary of the senate; and the remaining members shall be appointed
35 by the superintendent of public instruction.

36 (b) Members of the advisory committee shall serve without

1 compensation, but are entitled to be reimbursed for travel expenses in
2 accordance with RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060.

3 (2) The advisory committee shall conduct a detailed analysis of the
4 achievement gap for African-American students; examine the extent to
5 which current initiatives address the needs of African-American
6 students; craft a strategic plan with school and community-based
7 strategies to improve educational outcomes for African-American
8 students; and develop performance improvement measures and benchmarks
9 to monitor progress. The committee shall:

10 (a) Examine detailed data on achievement indicators based on grade
11 level, school, gender, migrant status, and income status for African-
12 American students to identify any trends or variances. The Washington
13 state institute for public policy shall assist the committee in
14 providing data analysis under this subsection (2)(a);

15 (b) Examine current federal, state, school, and community-based
16 initiatives intended to improve student achievement and identify best
17 practices and promising programs specifically for African-American
18 students, including initiatives in other states as necessary;

19 (c) Recommend a comprehensive and specific set of strategies,
20 programs, and interventions to improve the educational attainment of
21 African-American students, along with the funding necessary for
22 implementation. The committee shall include recommendations to
23 implement suggestions from the black education strategy roundtable
24 regarding family engagement and empowerment activities and capacity and
25 community-based supplemental education; and

26 (d) Develop educational performance measures and improvement
27 benchmarks to be monitored over time to gauge the progress and success
28 of the strategic plan.

29 (3) The center for the improvement of student learning and the
30 advisory committee shall make an interim report to the superintendent
31 of public instruction, the governor, and the education committees of
32 the legislature by December 1, 2008, and a final report by December 1,
33 2009.

34 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.300
35 RCW to read as follows:

36 Beginning in January 2011, the center for the improvement of
37 student learning shall report annually to the superintendent of public

1 instruction, the governor, and the education committees of the
2 legislature on the implementation status of strategies to address the
3 achievement gap for Africa-American students and on the progress in
4 improvement of education performance measures for African-American
5 students.

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