
Education Committee

HB 2147

Brief Description: Closing the achievement gap in order to provide all students an excellent and equitable education.

Sponsors: Representatives Liias, Pettigrew, Quall, McCoy, Chase and Kenney.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Establishes an Achievement Gap Advisory Committee (Committee) within the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.
- Assigns the Committee with providing advice to the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the State Board of Education, and the Professional Educator Standards Board on various measures and strategies to close the achievement gap.

Hearing Date: 2/17/09

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383)

Background:

The 2008 Legislature commissioned five distinct studies of the achievement gap for groups of K-12 students. Four of the studies were directed by budget provisos in the 2008 supplemental operating budget, and one of the studies was directed by a separate bill. The agencies assigned to conduct the studies were:

- the Center for the Improvement of Student Learning and an advisory committee to conduct the study for African American students;
- the Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs to conduct two distinct studies for Asian American students and Pacific Islander American students;
- the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs to conduct the study for Native American students; and
- the Commission on Hispanic Affairs to conduct the study for Hispanic 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.

The study groups submitted final reports on December 30, 2008. Recommendations from one or more of the achievement gap studies include:

- adopting a data collection, research, and evaluation plan to assess the reduction of gaps in achievement over time;
- revising school improvement plans to focus on efforts to close the achievement gap;
- improving collaboration between K-12 and higher education for preparation of teachers and recruitment and retention of diverse teachers and other educators;
- providing professional development in working with diverse students, parents, and communities; and
- improving parent and community involvement and engagement in public schools.

Another recommendation was to establish an appointed, statewide achievement gap oversight committee to monitor the implementation of efforts to close the achievement gap.

Summary of Bill:

An Achievement Gap Advisory Committee (Committee) is established within the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). The Committee is composed of at least eighteen members, with three members each appointed by each of the four ethnic commissions, including separate appointments representing Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and separate appointments representing African Americans and African American immigrants. The Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) can appoint up to five additional members.

Members of the Committee serve for two-year terms, with no limit on the number of terms, and the Chair is selected from the members for a one-year term. Members are not compensated, but receive travel reimbursement. Staff support is provided by the OSPI.

The purpose of the Committee is to advise the SPI, the State Board of Education, and the Professional Educator Standards Board on effective measures to close the achievement gap, foster public accountability for achieving excellence and equity in public education, and promote a greater sense of urgency and priority. The Committee has the following responsibilities:

- establish key indicators and benchmarks to measure progress in closing the achievement gap and advise the OSPI on data collection;
- identify current programs and resources that have the potential to narrow the gap and make recommendations for their effective utilization;
- offer advice on how to improve communication and coordination among programs aimed at narrowing the gap;
- advise on effective professional development programs and practices that increase cultural competence, family and community engagement, and instruction for struggling students;
- advise on effective methods of recruiting and retaining diverse teachers and school administrators; and
- advise on making closing the achievement gap a central goal of all school improvement programs and plans.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 11, 2009.

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