

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 2147

As Passed House:

March 9, 2009

Title: An act relating to closing the achievement gap in order to provide all students an excellent and equitable education.

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

Sponsors: House Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Liias, Pettigrew, Quall, McCoy, Chase and Kenney).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/17/09, 2/20/09 [DPS];

Education Appropriations: 2/25/09, 2/26/09 [DPS(ED)].

Floor Activity

Passed House: 3/9/09, 94-0.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Establishes an Achievement Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee (Committee) within the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).
- Assigns the Committee with providing advice and recommendations 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.
- Directs the OSPI to design and create a phased-in implementation plan for up to three Innovation Academies in areas with high concentrations of students who statistically lag behind in achievement.
- Describes the characteristics of Innovation Academies, which focus on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics and showcase best practices in instruction and community involvement.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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.

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Quall, Chair; Probst, Vice Chair; Priest, Ranking Minority Member; Hope, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Cox, Dammeier, Hunt, Johnson, Liias, Maxwell, Orwall, Santos and Sullivan.

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383)

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: The substitute bill by Committee on Education be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 14 members: Representatives Haigh, Chair; Sullivan, Vice Chair; Priest, Ranking Minority Member; Hope, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Carlyle, Cox, Haler, Hunter, Kagi, Probst, Quall, Rolfes and Wallace.

Staff: Wendy Polzin (786-7137)

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 (CISL) 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.

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.

One study recommended establishing an appointed, statewide achievement gap oversight committee to monitor the implementation of efforts to close the achievement gap. Another recommendation was to develop a plan for implementation of demonstration schools that would focus on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics and showcase rigorous, structured, and culturally-responsive curriculum; strong leadership; high-quality teachers; supplemental student support; and parent training.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Oversight Committee.

An Achievement Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee (Committee) is established within the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). The Committee is composed of at least 18 members, appointed as follows:

- three members representing African Americans and three members representing African American immigrants, appointed by the Commission on African American Affairs;
- three members representing Asian Americans and three members representing Pacific Islanders appointed by the Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs;
- three members appointed by the Commission on Hispanic Affairs; and
- three representatives of federally recognized tribes with territorial lands in Washington, appointed by the federally recognized tribes.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) can appoint up to five additional members, one of whom must represent an institution of higher education. 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 CISL, within existing resources.

The purpose of the Committee is to oversee and assure timely and complete implementation of the recommendations from the achievement gap reports commissioned in 2008, and 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;
- recommend current programs and resources that should be redirected to narrow the gap;
- provide strategies on how to improve communication and coordination among programs aimed at narrowing the gap;
- recommend effective professional development programs and practices that increase cultural competence, family and community engagement, and instruction for struggling students, including English language learners;
- advise on effective methods of recruiting and retaining diverse teachers and school administrators;
- collaborate on making closing the achievement gap a central goal of all school improvement programs and plans;
- continuously review research to identify practices and initiatives that are making a difference in closing the gap;
- recommend exemplary school models that have shown success in closing the achievement gap; and
- submit an annual update and progress report to the education committees of the Legislature.

Innovation Academies.

Within existing funds, the OSPI designs and creates a phased-in implementation plan for up to three Innovation Academies, which are intended to be implemented beginning in the 2011 - 2012 school year in areas with high concentrations of students who statistically lag behind in achievement.

An Innovation Academy is a school that provides:

- preparation of students for careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics;
- integration of best practices;
- early outreach to parents to help them provide early learning for infants and toddlers as well as early learning programs for children that begin at age 3;
- parent involvement and training, along with planning for postsecondary education;
- rigorous curriculum including dual enrollment options;
- instructional strategies that address multiple learning styles and cultural contexts;
- highly qualified teachers who have a mastery of content knowledge and pedagogy and who participate in professional learning communities;
- technology;
- transitional assistance to ensure all students are prepared for college-level work;
- partnerships with local businesses; and
- integration of best practices and exemplary programs.

The OSPI submits a plan for implementation and funding of the initial Innovation Academies to the Governor and the Legislature by September 1, 2009.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Education):

(In support) This is an opportunity to sustain the momentum of the achievement gap studies and assure continued focus and attention. All children deserve an equal chance to reach graduation. The key is to continue collaboration and dialogue. Some of the best work in addressing the achievement gap in accessing postsecondary education is done by the baccalaureate institutions in collaboration with K-12. The institutions would welcome the opportunity to add their expertise to the Committee. It is important to institutionalize ongoing advice and oversight to strengthen the efforts to close the achievement gap. This provides continuity in implementing the recommendations. The study groups fulfilled their charge thoughtfully and strategically. This bill addresses key goals and strategies, as well as the key themes appearing in all of the studies. The bill sends a message that addressing the achievement gap is a paramount duty and the Legislature is going to act on that duty. There is no shortage of will to address the achievement gap.

(Opposed) None.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Education Appropriations):

(In support) The achievement gap between students is a big issue and in 2008 there was an effort made to study it. Five different groups worked on the issue and came up with recommendations. Creating this oversight panel was one of the recommendations the groups made. The principal costs related to the bill are for travel, and it may be possible to lower them. The Innovation Academies were another item recommended by the study groups. This bill is the next step in the achievement gap work begun in 2008. The committee being created will have the ability to work with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and to redirect resources to strategies that work.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying (Education): Representative Liias, prime sponsor; Mike Reilly, Council of Presidents; Vicki Austin and Mona Bailey, Black Education Strategy Roundtable; and Brad Burnham, State Board of Education.

Persons Testifying (Education Appropriations): Representative Liias, prime sponsor; and Vicki Austin, Black Education Strategy Roundtable.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Education): None.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Education Appropriations): None.