

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SHB 2147

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As of March 30, 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:** Passed House: 3/09/09, 94-0.

**Committee Activity:** Early Learning & K-12 Education: 3/18/09.

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

**Staff:** Juliana Roe (786-7438)

**Background:** The 2008 Legislature commissioned five studies, by way of 2SHB 2722 (2008) and four provisos in the 2008 Supplemental Operating Budget, that analyzed the differences in academic achievement and educational outcomes among various subgroups of students. These differences are referred to as the achievement gap. The commissioned studies drew from research, best practices, and personal, professional, and cultural experiences and came up with various recommendations to close the achievement gap.

**Summary of Bill:** An Achievement Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee is established within the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) composed of at least 18 members appointed for two-year terms. The members include three individuals appointed by the commission on African American affairs; three members representing African immigrants appointed by the commission on African American affairs; three individuals appointed by the commission on Hispanic affairs; three representatives of federally-recognized tribes with territorial lands in Washington appointed by the federally-recognized tribes; three individuals representing Asian Americans appointed by the commission on Asian American affairs; and three individuals representing Pacific Islander Americans appointed by the commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs. OSPI may appoint up to five additional members, one of whom must represent an institution of higher education.

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The committee is required to advise OSPI and the State Board of Education (SBE) on measures to close the achievement gap, and foster public accountability for achieving excellence and equity in public education and the promotion of a greater sense of urgency and priority for doing so. The committee is also required to establish key indicators and benchmarks to close the achievement gap; recommend programs and resources to be redirected to narrow the gap; provide strategies to improve communication and coordination among programs aimed at narrowing the achievement gap; recommend professional development programs and practices that increase cultural competence to OSPI and the Professional Educators Standards Board (PESB); collaborate with OSPI and SBE to make closing the achievement gap a goal of all school improvement programs and plans; continuously review research to identify practices that make a difference in closing the achievement gap; recommend exemplary school models that have had success in closing the achievement gap; and submit annual updates to the education committees of the Legislature. Members of the committee will only be provided travel reimbursement.

OSPI must, within existing resources, design and create a phased-in implementation of up to three innovation academies in areas with high concentrations of students who statistically lag behind in achievement. Innovation academies provide preparation for careers in science, technology, engineering, and math; early outreach to parents and children; parent involvement and training, along with postsecondary education; rigorous curriculum including dual enrollment options; instructional strategies that address multiple learning styles and cultural contexts; highly qualified teachers; technology; transitional assistance to ensure college-level work preparation; partnerships with local businesses; and integration of best practices and exemplary programs.

OSPI must submit a plan to the Governor and the Legislature for implementation of innovation academies by September 1, 2009.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: A work group on the achievement gap is an important step to push forward. We are optimistic that we can close the achievement gap. One avenue to pursue in closing the achievement gap is that leading to innovation academies. These would be the first phase leading toward a statewide implementation plan, not an experiment.

OTHER: There is great support for the language used in HB 2261 and 2SSB 5973, rather than SHB 2147. It is important to develop language that respects all cultures. One size does not fit all. There are several factors that we need to focus on. There needs to be a stop to children being pushed out of school. Community and parental involvement needs to be emphasized. Cultural relevance needs attention as well. Past "experiments" such as those being proposed as innovation academies often get lost in translation. They never develop

into more than an experiment. Further, schools are inundated with things that they have to do and taking on one of these experiments may be another thing that they do not want to take on. SHB 2147 is overly ambitious. While a study is important, trying to accomplish all of the things set forth in SHB 2147 may be too much. There is a great divide between these bills. It may be so wide that it prohibits progress. HB 2261 is a bill that would accomplish the goals of these groups.

There are many factors within the various achievement gap reports that are similar. Each report points to the need for more data and more disaggregated data; culturally responsive and relevant education systems in the state; culturally responsive professional educators; and input, valued involvement, and engagement of parents, caregivers, and elders. This is the first time in history that Washington has had these types of reports conducted by the populations that are in the most need. These populations are telling the state what is most needed for these students to succeed. This is relevant for grades P-24, not just K-12. It would be helpful to include higher education in this bill.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Mona Bailey, Vicki Austen, Black Education Strategy Roundtable.

OTHER: Ben Kodama, Equitable Opportunity Caucus; Barbara Guzman, Latino/a Educational Achievement Project; Dr. Don Woodcock, citizen.