
HOUSE BILL 1149

State of Washington

67th Legislature

2021 Regular Session

By Representatives Pollet, Dolan, Ramel, Ormsby, Lekanoff, Goodman, Wicks, and Valdez

Read first time 01/12/21. Referred to Committee on Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to improving the public health knowledge of
2 students in public schools; adding a new section to chapter 28A.655
3 RCW; creating new sections; and providing an expiration date.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) In 2020, more than 2,500
6 Washingtonians have died due to COVID-19. State data shows that
7 COVID-19 has disproportionately affected people who identify as
8 Hispanic, Black, American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian
9 or other Pacific Islander. The centers for disease control and
10 prevention has identified inequities in social determinants of health
11 as factors that contribute to racial and ethnic minority groups'
12 increased risk of contracting COVID-19. Social determinants of health
13 are conditions in the places where people live, learn, work, and play
14 that affect a wide range of health and quality of life risks and
15 outcomes. In addition, despite public health guidelines, people
16 continue to engage in practices that contribute to the spread of
17 COVID-19.

18 (2) According to the office of the superintendent of public
19 instruction, the purpose of health education is to develop health-
20 literate students, students who acquire the knowledge and skills
21 needed to engage in meaningful and health-enhancing lifetime

1 behaviors. However, data shows that health literacy is very low in
2 the United States, including in Washington state. In addition,
3 current state health education standards and outcomes focus primarily
4 on individual health behaviors and outcomes even though individual
5 health behaviors and outcomes only account for half of an
6 individual's health. These factors and others indicate current health
7 education does not adequately provide high school students with a
8 comprehensive understanding of how to be healthy and how to create
9 healthy communities.

10 (3) COVID-19 has shown the need for every student to understand
11 the principles of public health, including the social determinants of
12 health, and have adequate health literacy. The legislature intends to
13 address this need by establishing a collaborative process to
14 strengthen state health education high school learning outcomes for
15 the purpose of explicitly including public health concepts.

16 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.655
17 RCW to read as follows:

18 (1) The superintendent of public instruction shall identify the
19 public health knowledge and skills that public school students in
20 grades nine through 12 need to know and apply in support of health
21 enhancing behaviors, positive health outcomes, and healthy
22 communities. The knowledge and skills identified in accordance with
23 this section must be based on the student learning goals in RCW
24 28A.150.210.

25 (2) The public health knowledge and skills identified under this
26 section, and the associated outcomes, must:

27 (a) Be an integrated component of the health and physical
28 education state learning standards adopted under RCW 28A.655.070;

29 (b) Include new or modified grade-level outcomes for students in
30 grades nine through 12; and

31 (c) Take effect in the beginning of the 2022-23 school year and
32 be incorporated into the health and physical education state learning
33 standards upon the adoption of any new or revised health and physical
34 education state learning standards occurring on or after January 1,
35 2022.

36 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) The superintendent of public
37 instruction shall convene a public health education advisory

1 committee to provide advice, assistance, and recommendations to the
2 superintendent in meeting the requirements of section 2 of this act.

3 (2) The committee shall also:

4 (a) Identify or develop proposals for grade-level outcomes for
5 students in grades nine through 12 that can be used for public health
6 instruction and promotion;

7 (b) Identify and recommend public health curricula for students
8 in grades nine through 12 and propose an alignment of the identified
9 curricula with standards and outcomes used prior to the effective
10 date of this section. In meeting the requirements of this subsection,
11 the committee may also recommend alignment of the curricula with
12 standards and outcomes in other subject matters, including
13 mathematics, social studies, and science; and

14 (c) Advise the office of the superintendent of public instruction
15 on whether there is a need for new educational materials, resources,
16 and professional development in support of section 2 of this act.

17 (3) The superintendent of public instruction has discretion in
18 determining the membership of the committee but, at a minimum, must
19 invite participation and seek input from:

20 (a) The interagency coordinating council on health disparities of
21 the office of the governor;

22 (b) The department of health;

23 (c) The commission on African American affairs;

24 (d) The commission on Asian Pacific American affairs;

25 (e) The commission on Hispanic affairs;

26 (f) The LGBTQ commission of the office of the governor;

27 (g) The Washington school directors' association;

28 (h) K-12 educators with either experience in developing public
29 health curricula or health and fitness endorsements, or both, from a
30 statewide organization representing teachers;

31 (i) A statewide organization representing parents, teachers, and
32 students;

33 (j) A statewide organization representing school principals; and

34 (k) Higher education public health programs.

35 (4) Staff support for the committee must be provided by the
36 office of the superintendent of public instruction.

37 (5) This section expires December 31, 2021.

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