
SENATE BILL 5981

State of Washington 55th Legislature 1997 Regular Session

By Senators Kline, Fairley, Prentice, Thibaudeau and Kohl

Read first time 02/24/97. Referred to Committee on Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to providing instruction in the language and
2 cultures of other nations; adding new sections to chapter 28A.180 RCW;
3 and creating a new section.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that the significant
6 increase of trade and commerce and interaction between the United
7 States and other countries makes it imperative that action be taken to
8 ensure that Washington state increases the number of individuals who
9 are fluent in languages other than English and who understand the
10 culture and customs of other countries. These actions will help to
11 ensure that Washington state maintains its leading role in
12 international trade.

13 The legislature further finds one way to increase the development
14 of foreign languages and knowledge of foreign cultures is to ensure
15 that students who speak a language other than English at home do not
16 lose their ability to communicate in the language of their parents and
17 forbearers.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.180
2 RCW to read as follows:

3 In addition to the other requirements of this chapter, school
4 districts may provide world language instruction to students who come
5 from homes where the primary language is other than English. In
6 addition, school districts may provide instruction regarding the
7 culture of the country from which the students' families emigrated.
8 The purpose of the instruction is not to help the students understand
9 English better, but to improve the students' ability to speak their
10 native language and to understand the culture and customs of the
11 country in which their families lived.

12 School districts offering the instruction shall develop assessments
13 to determine if participating students are improving language
14 competency and cultural understanding.

15 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.180
16 RCW to read as follows:

17 School districts shall encourage the active participation of
18 members from appropriate ethnic communities in establishing and
19 implementing the instructional program in section 2 of this act.
20 School districts are encouraged to appoint advisory councils to
21 participate in curriculum development and other decisions including the
22 selection of staff pertaining to the instructional program under
23 section 2 of this act. Members of the ethnic communities also should
24 be encouraged to participate financially in the program.

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