

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## 2SHB 1896

As Passed Senate - Amended, March 6, 2018

**Title:** An act relating to the expansion of civics education in public schools.

**Brief Description:** Expanding civics education in public school.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Dolan, Stonier, Lovick, Springer, Appleton, Bergquist, Manweller, Tarleton, Frame, Goodman and Ormsby).

**Brief History:** Passed House: 2/09/18, 98-0.

**Committee Activity:** Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/20/18, 2/22/18 [DPA-WM, w/oRec].

Ways & Means: 2/24/18, 2/26/18 [DPA(WM)].

**Floor Activity:**

Passed Senate - Amended: 3/06/18, 49-0.

### Brief Summary of Bill (As Amended by Senate)

- Requires that by the 2020-21 school year, each school district with a high school must provide a mandatory .5-credit stand-alone civics course with specific content requirements for each high school student.
- Allows school districts to embed civics content and instruction in dual credit courses.
- Establishes an expanded civics education teacher training program within the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), subject to the availability of funds, to provide civics-specific teacher training, professional learning opportunities, and developed teacher training materials.
- Instructs OSPI to select two school districts to serve as demonstration sites for enhanced civics education.
- Transfers administration and coordination of the Washington History Day Program (Program) from the Washington State Historical Society (WSHS) to OSPI, effective July 1, 2018.

*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.*

- Specifies that the Program must be operated as a partnership between WSHS, OSPI, and private parties interested in providing funding and in-kind support.
- Creates a new non-appropriated Washington History Day Account in the custody of the Washington State treasurer.

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

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Wellman, Chair; Rolfes, Vice Chair; Zeiger, Ranking Member; Hawkins, Hunt, Mullet, Pedersen and Rivers.

**Minority Report:** That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senators Billig and Padden.

**Staff:** Benjamin Omdal (786-7442)

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## SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended by Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Rolfes, Chair; Frockt, Vice Chair; Braun, Ranking Member; Honeyford, Assistant Ranking Member; Bailey, Becker, Billig, Brown, Carlyle, Conway, Darneille, Fain, Hasegawa, Hunt, Keiser, Mullet, Palumbo, Pedersen, Ranker, Rivers, Van De Wege, Wagoner and Warnick.

**Staff:** Jeffrey Naas (786-7708)

**Background:** High School Graduation Requirements. High school graduation requirements in Washington State are formulated by the State Board of Education and set by rule, subject to certain statutory guidelines. Modifications to graduation requirements are set in four-year increments, so as to not change requirements for students after beginning the equivalent of a four-year program. Requirements at the state level are minimum requirements; districts may add more and ultimately determine if standards have been met by graduating students.

Social Studies and Civics Graduation Requirements. Currently, high school students must take three social studies credits, consisting of 2.5 credits in prescribed courses and a half credit social studies elective. Of these courses, one credit is required in United States history, and one credit is required in contemporary world history, geography, and problems, which can be satisfied by taking an equivalency in economics, sociology, civics, political science, international relations, or related courses with emphasis on contemporary world problems. A half credit is required in civics.

State law requires that the content of the civics requirement must at a minimum include:

- federal, state, and local government organization and procedures;
- rights and responsibilities of citizens addressed in the Washington and United States constitutions;

- current issues addressed at each level of government; and
- electoral issues, including elections, ballot measures, initiatives, and referenda.

Basic Education and Civics Requirements. The state's program of basic education is a set of minimum standards for public schools in Washington, as required by the state Constitution. Of the four main goals of basic education set in Washington law, the second goal states that each district must provide opportunities to every student to develop the knowledge and skills essential to know and apply the core concepts and principles of, among other subjects, civics and history, including different cultures and participation in representative government.

While curriculum in these courses is mostly set at the district level, OSPI does provide essential academic learning requirements that state the skills and knowledge high school students should attain based on the four main goals of basic education. These are set out in the K-12 Social Studies Learning Standards.

WSHS. WSHS, a tax-exempt nonprofit organization, has the statutory duty as a trustee of the state to collect, catalog, and preserve, historical materials that illustrate the history of the state of Washington. Additionally, WSHS's duties include operating state museums, conducting educational activities and celebrations of significant events in the history of Washington, and engaging in fund-raising. WSHS is governed by a board of trustees that includes the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

National History Day and Washington History Day. The National History Day organization (NHD), a nonprofit organization established in 1974, offers year-long academic programs for students in grades 6-12 that have a focus on historical research. In addition to providing curriculum materials and professional development opportunities for teachers, the NHD operates the National History Day Contest, which is the final stage of a series of contests beginning at the local and state/affiliated levels. Washington participates as an affiliate through the Program. The Program is administered by WSHS. According to WSHS, more than 8000 students participate in the Program each year.

OSPI. There is a social studies office within OSPI that provides guidance for the development and implementation of the Washington social studies student learning standards and classroom-based assessments.

**Summary of Amended Bill:** Mandatory Civics Stand-Alone Course. Beginning with or before the 2020-21 school year, each district that operates a high school must provide a mandatory stand-alone course in civics for each high school student. The course must be one-half a credit and must include course content on:

- federal, state, tribal and local government organization and procedures;
- rights and responsibilities of citizens addressed in the Washington and United States constitutions;
- current issues addressed at each level of government;
- electoral issues, including elections, ballot measures, initiatives, and referenda;
- the study and completion of the civics component of the naturalization test administered by the United States; and
- the importance in a free society of living the basic values and character traits listed in state law as essential to individual liberty, fulfillment, and happiness.

School districts may embed civics content and instruction in dual credit social studies courses.

The current statute in Washington law pertaining to content of civics requirement is repealed.

Civics Education Teacher Training Program. An expanded civics education teacher training program is established within OSPI. The program must provide for the selection of a team of social studies teachers and civics education specialists, who must:

- develop teacher training materials containing civics information on various types of governments and the civics component of the United States naturalization test, using existing open educational resources;
- provide teacher training across the state using specific tools established by OSPI; and
- provide professional learning opportunities as described by state law.

Enhanced Civics Education Demonstration Sites. OSPI must select two districts to serve as demonstration sites for enhanced civics education. These districts must be diverse in size and geographic/demographic makeup, and will:

- implement and assess an in-depth civics education program;
- collaborate with programs and agencies in the local community in order to expand after-school and summer civics education opportunities;
- monitor and report the level of penetration of civics education in school and out-of-school programs;
- ensure that underserved students are prioritized in program implementation;
- develop evaluation standards and a procedure for endorsing a civics education curriculum for use in other districts and out-of-school programs; and
- provide an annual report by December 1 each year to the Governor and the education committees of the Legislature.

History Day Administration. Responsibility for administering the Program is transferred from WSHS to OSPI effective July 1, 2018. OSPI is responsible for the administration and coordination of the Program, including providing necessary staff support, subject to funds appropriated for this specific purpose.

Although OSPI has administrative and coordination duties, the Program must be operated as a partnership between OSPI, WSHS, and private parties interested in providing funding and in-kind support. WSHS, in coordination with OSPI, must promote the Program and provide access and support for students who are conducting historical research of Washington documents and commentary.

A non-appropriated Washington History Day Account is created in the custody of the Washington State treasurer. All monies from public and private sources to support Washington History Day must be deposited into the account. Only OSPI or OSPI's designee may authorize expenditures from the account.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed. Includes a null and void clause.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Second Substitute House Bill (Early Learning & K-12 Education):** *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* PRO: Requiring a stand-alone course will place a greater emphasis on civics in education. Having a robust civics education program helps strengthen democracy. Incorporating out-of-classroom experiences will help engage students in civics and improve civic discourse. Ongoing professional development will provide great help in furthering civic education. The demonstration sites could provide better understanding of how to best implement a civic curriculum.

CON: Rural schools should be able to make their own decisions on encompassing civics into their curricula, based on local needs.

**Persons Testifying (Early Learning & K-12 Education):** PRO: Representative Laurie Dolan, Prime Sponsor; David Beard, School's Out Washington; Carol Coe, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction; Karen Verrill, League of Women Voters of Washington; Terry Bergeson, interim Dean of Education and Kinesiology, Pacific Lutheran University.

CON: Marcus Morgan, Reardan Edwall School District.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Early Learning & K-12 Education):** No one.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Bill as Amended by Early Learning & K-12 (Ways & Means):** *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* PRO: Most school districts cannot afford to buy book or pay for professional development for their teachers. This would provide important statewide development for teachers. Democracy depends on the students knowing how government works. This emphasizes civics as it is outlined by the Legislature. OSPI is not concerned what the course is called, but the course must cover the specific content in the course.

**Persons Testifying (Ways & Means):** PRO: Carol Coe, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; Karen Verrill, League of Women Voters of Washington.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Ways & Means):** No one.