
Education Committee

HB 2814

Brief Description: Emphasizing civics education.

Sponsors: Representatives Upthegrove, Delvin, Quall, Linville, Wood, Ruderman, Schual-Berke, Chase, Santos and Kagi.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates the Daniel J. Evans Civic Education Award for four students annually who have demonstrated civic leadership in their communities and who have completed a classroom-based assessment in civics developed by the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI).
- Provides professional development grants to teachers who have used one or more of the classroom-based civics assessments developed by SPI.
- Provides summer professional development opportunities for teachers in the implementation of the civics essential academic learning requirements and the classroom-based assessments in civics.

Hearing Date: 1/29/04

Staff: Susan Morrissey (786-7111).

Background:

By law, students must study the constitutions of the United States and the state of Washington in order to graduate from the public and private schools of the state. The State Board of Education (SBE), acting upon recommendations of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, is required to adopt rules to implement the requirement.

The SBE has adopted a rule that, until the graduating class of 2007, students must have at least one credit in American history and government and one-half credit in Washington state history and government in order to graduate from one of the state's public or approved private schools. The American history and government course must include study of the United States Constitution. The course on the history and government of the state must include study of the state constitution.

Beginning with the graduating class of 2008, students who graduate must have a total of at least 2.5 high school level credits in some combination of history, geography and civics in order to

receive a diploma. The course work offered in these subjects must be aligned with the state's social studies essential academic learning requirements.

The Essential Academic Learning Requirements for social studies includes a democracy benchmark for students in grades five, eight, and ten. The benchmark states, "The student understands and can explain the core values and principles of the U.S. democracy as set forth in foundational documents, including the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution." The specific knowledge required on the Constitution varies for each of the three grade levels.

At the beginning of each school day and at the opening of all school assemblies, schools must have flag exercises and students must be given the opportunity to salute the flag using the Pledge of Allegiance. Students who choose not say the pledge are required to maintain a respectful silence.

Summary of Bill:

The Daniel J. Evans Civic Education Award is created to recognize students who have demonstrated that they understand the state's essential academic learning requirements in civics. Students must demonstrate this understanding through leadership in the civic life of the students' communities and completion of at least one of the classroom-based civics assessments developed by the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI). SPI will select four students for the award each year and will notify the governor and legislature with the recipient's names. Of the four recipients, two will be selected from Eastern Washington and two from Western Washington.

The SPI will receive \$10,000 for the next fiscal year to provide professional development grants to teachers who have used one or more of the classroom-based civics assessments developed by the agency. The grants may be used to attend civics conferences and trainings that cover the skills and knowledge included in the state's essential academic learning requirements (EALRs) in civics.

The SPI will receive \$35,000 for the next fiscal year to provide teachers with summer professional development opportunities in civics. The opportunities must be focused on the implementation of the civics EALRs and classroom-based assessments.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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