
Education Committee

SSB 5612

Brief Description: Concerning Holocaust education.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators Rivers, Salomon, Frockt, Wilson, C., Carlyle, Billig, Wellman, Zeiger, Warnick, Palumbo, Pedersen, Van De Wege, Hasegawa, Holy, Hunt, Keiser, Kuderer, Liias and O'Ban).

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Strongly encourages instruction on the Holocaust in every public middle, junior high, and high school.
- Directs the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to collaborate with an expert organization to develop best practices and guidelines for high quality instruction on the Holocaust and to encourage, support, and train teachers in implementing them.
- Requires middle, junior high, and high schools offering Holocaust instruction to follow the best practices and guidelines, beginning September 1, 2020.
- Directs the OSPI to report to the Legislature with a summary of specified feedback and a recommendation about whether Holocaust instruction should be required in public schools, and if so, in which grades.

Hearing Date: 3/25/19

Staff: Megan Wargacki (786-7194).

Background:

Since 1992, public high schools have been encouraged to include instruction on the events of the period in modern world history known as the Holocaust, during which six million Jews and millions of non-Jews were exterminated. Legislation enacted at that time specified that this instruction may also include other examples from both ancient and modern history where subcultures or large human populations have been eradicated by the acts of humankind. In

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addition, the legislation stated that the studying of this material is a reaffirmation of the commitment of free peoples never again to permit such occurrences.

Summary of Bill:

Holocaust Instruction Encouraged. Language encouraging public high schools to include Holocaust instruction is modified as follows: every public middle school, junior high school, and high school is strongly encouraged to include instruction on the events of the period in modern world history known as the Holocaust, the systemic, German state-sponsored persecution and murder of Jews and other innocent victims by the Nazi regime and its collaborators between the years 1933 and 1945. The instruction may also include other examples of genocide and crimes against humanity. The studying of this material is intended to: examine the ramifications of prejudice, racism, and intolerance; prepare students to be responsible citizens in a pluralistic democracy; and be a reaffirmation of the commitment of free peoples never again to permit such occurrences.

Best Practices and Guidelines. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), in collaboration with an expert Washington nonprofit organization that teaches the lessons of the Holocaust (Holocaust expert), must:

- develop best practices and guidelines for high quality Holocaust instruction, and annually publish them electronically;
- encourage and support middle school, junior high school, and high school teachers in implementing these best practices and guidelines; and
- support and train middle school, junior high school, and high school teachers who teach relevant subjects in using the best practices and guidelines, subject to state funding.

Beginning September 1, 2020, middle schools, junior high schools, and high schools that offer Holocaust instruction must follow the best practices and guidelines.

Reports. By November 14, 2022, the OSPI must collect feedback from Holocaust experts about: how the best practices and guidelines on Holocaust instruction are being implemented statewide; whether, and how, the best practices and guidelines should be modified; the number of teachers trained and supported on using the best practices and guidelines in the past two years; and whether Holocaust instruction should be required in public schools, and if so, in which grades.

By December 12, 2022, the OSPI must work with Holocaust experts to summarize the feedback collected and report it to the Legislature with a recommendation about whether Holocaust instruction should be required in public schools, and if so, in which grades.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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