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SENATE BILL 6385

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State of Washington

58th Legislature

2004 Regular Session

By Senators Carlson, McAuliffe, Rasmussen, Eide, Doumit, Esser, Parlette, Schmidt, Swecker, Oke, Jacobsen, Winsley, B. Sheldon, Haugen, Kline, Keiser, Kohl-Welles and Pflug

Read first time 01/19/2004. Referred to Committee on Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to promoting environmental education partnerships  
2 and strategic planning; adding new sections to chapter 28A.300 RCW; and  
3 creating a new section.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds in the  
6 "Environmental Education in Washington Status Report 2003," that  
7 environmental education has been demonstrated to improve: Student  
8 behavior and achievement, Washington assessment of student learning  
9 scores, and teacher and community engagement. The legislature finds  
10 environmental education programs aligned with the state's essential  
11 academic learning requirements that integrate the basic subject areas  
12 of the common school curriculum, identified in chapter 28A.230 RCW,  
13 help implement the goals of Washington state education reform.

14 (2) The legislature finds that environmental education is one of  
15 the most effective strategies for meeting the educational and quality  
16 of life needs of Washington citizens. Environmental education is found  
17 to:

18 (a) Improve student academic achievement;

1 (b) Create economic efficiencies for state agencies' programs  
2 including restoration, habitat assessments and wildlife monitoring, and  
3 public health protection;

4 (c) Foster successful public/private partnerships to promote and  
5 deliver quality education initiatives;

6 (d) Increase community involvement in public schools and students'  
7 civic engagement in their communities; and

8 (e) Promote sustainability and stewardship of our great natural  
9 heritage.

10 (3) The legislature finds that Washington lacks a unified approach  
11 and infrastructure to support environmental education partnerships and  
12 programs that enhance student learning and maintain the health and  
13 sustainability of Washington's schools, communities, and environments.

14 (4) The intent of the legislature is to promote environmental  
15 education efficacy through the development of a comprehensive statewide  
16 environmental education strategic plan.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.300  
18 RCW to read as follows:

19 (1) The governor's council on environmental education shall develop  
20 a comprehensive statewide environmental education strategic plan. The  
21 term "environment" is to be broadly interpreted to include natural,  
22 cultural, historical, and economic environments as well as how  
23 environmental factors can harm human health. The term "education" is  
24 also to be broadly interpreted to include formal and nonformal  
25 community education. The plan shall provide coordinated direction to  
26 integrate environmental education as a standard part of Washington's  
27 teaching and learning. Through the coordinated development of the  
28 plan, the governor's council on environmental education and  
29 environmental education stakeholders shall develop strategies to:

30 (a) Meet school teacher and administrator demand;  
31 (b) Adhere to the essential academic learning requirements;  
32 (c) Provide sufficient in-service and preservice teacher training;  
33 (d) Increase support within state agencies to promote volunteer  
34 participation, student learning, and economic efficiencies;

35 (e) Promote economic, environmental, and ecological health;

36 (f) Draw from Washington's diverse cultural heritage, rich history,  
37 and stewardship approaches;

- 1 (g) Consolidate statewide coordination;
- 2 (h) Centralize accessibility to environmental education resources;
- 3 (i) Standardize quality assurance through assessment and  
4 evaluation;
- 5 (j) Develop a systemic accounting of environmental education  
6 policies, funding structures, programs, and associated costs;
- 7 (k) Recommend sustainable public and private revenue streams and  
8 funding mechanisms; and
- 9 (l) Support the implementation of agencies' sustainability plans as  
10 directed by executive order 02-03.
- 11 (2) To the extent funds and staff are available, state agencies  
12 shall participate in developing the comprehensive statewide  
13 environmental education plan including but not limited to the following  
14 state agencies:
- 15 (a) Department of agriculture;
- 16 (b) Department of ecology;
- 17 (c) Department of fish and wildlife;
- 18 (d) Department of health;
- 19 (e) Office of Indian affairs;
- 20 (f) Department of natural resources;
- 21 (g) Parks and recreation commission;
- 22 (h) Department of transportation;
- 23 (i) Office of superintendent of public instruction; and
- 24 (j) Conservation commission.
- 25 (3) The plan shall include input and perspectives from interested  
26 public and private stakeholders including, but not limited to:  
27 Agriculture; business; colleges and universities; federal agencies;  
28 forestry; public and private school administrators, teachers, and  
29 directors; education associations; community educators; environmental  
30 health organizations; counties; cities; tribes; conservation  
31 organizations; and service clubs.

32 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.300  
33 RCW to read as follows:

- 34 (1) The governor's council on environmental education shall partner  
35 with private environmental education stakeholders to secure resources  
36 for and to develop the comprehensive statewide environmental education  
37 strategic plan.

1 (2) Developing the plan may include:

2 (a) A series of regional planning meetings to ensure the  
3 participation of all local community stakeholders; and

4 (b) A working conference to engage interested stakeholders  
5 statewide in developing the plan.

6 (3) Annual status reports shall be made to the legislature no later  
7 than December 2004 and December 2005. The final comprehensive  
8 statewide environmental education strategic plan shall be presented to  
9 the legislature by July 1, 2006.

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