

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5528

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Early Learning & K-12 Education, February 22, 2007
Ways & Means, March 5, 2007

Title: An act relating to mathematics education.

Brief Description: Requiring a review of the essential academic learning requirements in mathematics.

Sponsors: Senators Pflug, Holmquist, Zarelli, Swecker, Clements, Stevens, Roach, Hewitt, Delvin and Parlette.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/05/07, 2/22/07 [DPS-WM].
Ways & Means: 2/26/07, 3/05/07 [DP2S, w/oRec].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5528 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Tom, Vice Chair; Holmquist, Ranking Minority Member; Brandland, Clements, Eide, Hewitt, Hobbs, Kauffman, Oemig, Rasmussen, Weinstein and Zarelli.

Staff: Susan Mielke (786-7422)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 5528 be substituted therefor, and the second substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Prentice, Chair; Fraser, Vice Chair, Capital Budget Chair; Zarelli, Ranking Minority Member; Brandland, Carrell, Fairley, Hatfield, Hewitt, Hobbs, Honeyford, Keiser, Kohl-Welles, Oemig, Parlette, Rasmussen, Regala, Roach, Rockefeller and Schoesler.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Pridemore, Vice Chair, Operating Budget.

Staff: Bryon Moore (786-7726)

Background: In 1993, the Legislature directed the Commission on Student Learning (Commission) to develop the Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs), which

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.

describe what students should know and be able to do in eight content areas, including mathematics. The EALRs in mathematics were initially adopted in 1995 and revised in 1997. The Commission also established performance benchmarks in all the content areas at three grade levels: grades four, seven, and ten. The Commission completed its work in 1999 and was dissolved. Current law requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to periodically review the EALRs.

In 2002, the SPI began development of Grade Level Expectations (GLE) for grades kindergarten through ten. SPI released a refined version of the mathematics GLEs in September 2006.

As part of the Joint Mathematics Action Plan, the State Board of Education (SBE) will be contracting with a national consultant to conduct a review of the mathematics EALRs to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the current standards. The consultant will also recommend an appropriate methodology to benchmark Washington's students' mathematics performance to international standards. The consultant will work with a panel of mathematics teachers, district and building curriculum leaders, higher education faculty, parents, and business and community leaders. Depending upon funding, the consultant will also work with additional experts. A final report and recommendations is due by June 15, 2007, to the SBE and SPI.

Summary of Bill: The bill as referred to committee was not considered.

Summary of Proposed Substitute As Heard In Committee (Early Learning & K-12 Education): By July 1, 2007, the State Board of Education must establish an independent mathematics review committee comprised of 12 members: two exemplary mathematicians or scientists in academia; four mathematicians or scientists from industry; two parents; and four mathematics or science educators.

By July 1, 2008, the committee must review the current mathematics EALRs and make recommendations regarding changes to the Legislature, the Governor, the SBE, and SPI. The review must cover a specified list of issues. By July 1, 2009, the committee must review mathematics curriculum and materials to ensure alignment with the mathematics EALRs.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY RECOMMENDED SUBSTITUTE AS PASSED COMMITTEE (Early Learning & K-12 Education): The composition of the independent mathematics review committee established by the SBE is changed to four tenured professors in mathematics or science, four individuals from business and industry in mathematics-related fields, six mathematics classroom teachers, with proven experience, two parents; and one other citizen to serve as chair who is appointed by the Governor. The committee members must have certain minimum education levels, no conflicts of interests, and to be compensated. The timeline for the committee to make recommendations regarding changes to the mathematics EALRs and curriculum is shortened. The committee presents the recommendations to the Governor, the SBE, and SPI. SPI must present the recommendations to the 2008 Legislature.

SPI must adopt new standards and EALRs based on the changes recommended by the review committee unless the Legislature chooses to act. The menu of curricula developed by the committee must be "limited" in number. School districts that choose to use a curricula on the

menu that the review committee identifies must be compensated for the actual costs of implementation.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY RECOMMENDED SECOND SUBSTITUTE AS PASSED COMMITTEE (Ways & Means): The provisions that would have required the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction to reimburse school districts for the costs associated with their choosing to adopt math curricula off of the limited menu developed by the Independent Review committee are removed. School districts that chose to adopt new math curricula from the limited menu are encouraged to incorporate that adoption into their normal curricula replacement cycle. The Program for International Student Assessment is removed as an international benchmark.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Early Learning & K-12 Education): PRO: A key point of the bill is that the review committee must be truly independent. We need a review for many reasons: our state math standards and assessment has gotten failing grades by the Fordam Foundation; and too many students must take remedial classes, usually in math. The core foundation of a math curriculum must be in computation fluency and that means drills. Inquiry learning is not enough alone. Computation is not enough along. There needs to be a balanced, comprehensive approach with clear examples and explanations. We need to have fewer topics covered in math, instead of being a mile wide and an inch deep. We need to require mastery in a topic before moving the student on. Standards alone won't get us there. The curriculum must be aligned to the standards.

OTHER: The State Board of Education is currently putting together an independent panel with Washington and national experts. The board would be happy to use the study criteria provided in the bill. The board plans to have something for the Legislature by next winter. There needs to be an independent review, which means it should not include the SPI because they are the ones that created the problems. Also, we don't want to create another bureaucracy with another commission. We do have a concern about the limited menu of curricula because we need to ensure that means more than one in order to be a menu.

Persons Testifying (Early Learning & K-12 Education): PRO: Senator Pflug, prime sponsor; Bob Brandt, Where's the Math; Mickey Lahmann, Office of SPI; Julie Wright, Where's the Math.

OTHER: Edie Harding, SBE; Sharon Hanek; Dan Steele, Washington State School Directors' Association.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Ways & Means): PRO: A key point of the bill is that the review committee must be truly independent. While we need to be cognizant of cost of this measure, the cost of standards and curriculum that is not appropriate is much greater. This independent review needs to get conducted to better align math and science standards and

curriculum. This is a vital part of improving math and science instruction. This will build off of what is already occurring with Gates' Foundation funding.

Persons Testifying (Ways & Means): PRO: Senator Pflug, prime sponsor; Bob Brandt, Where's the Math; Julie Wright, Where's the Math/Washington State Parent Teacher Association.