

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5908

As of February 6, 2020

Title: An act relating to equity and cultural competency in the public school system.

Brief Description: Providing training for equity and cultural competency in the public school system.

Sponsors: Senators Das, Randall, Saldaña, Nguyen, Lias, Salomon, Conway, Darneille, Kuderer and Wilson, C.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/05/20.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Establishes the Center for Equity and Cultural Competency within the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and assigns certain duties.
- Incorporates equity, diversity, and inclusion professional development into existing cultural competency training for school board directors, district staff, and school staff.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Ailey Kato (786-7434)

Background: Standards for Cultural Competence. The Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) adopted a set of standards for effective teaching. In developing the standards, PESB had to incorporate standards for cultural competency along the entire continuum.

Cultural competency includes knowledge of student cultural histories and contexts, as well as family norms and values in different cultures; knowledge and skills in accessing community resources and community and parent outreach; and skills in adapting instruction to students' experiences and identifying cultural contexts for individual students.

Professional Development and Training. In 2016, the Legislature directed the creation of cultural competency professional development and training for different groups.

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.

School Board Directors. The Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA), in consultation with other entities, developed a plan for the creation and delivery of cultural competency training for school board of directors and superintendents.

School and District Staff. OSPI, in collaboration with other entities, developed a content outline for professional development and training in cultural competency for school staff. Educational service districts (ESDs) and school districts are encouraged to use this training.

School Districts Identified for Improvement. Certain districts identified for improvement are strongly encouraged to provide the cultural competency professional development and training.

Summary of Bill: Center for Equity and Cultural Competency. This center is established within OSPI to increase equity, diversity, inclusion, and cultural competency within all aspects of the public school system. Subject to appropriations, the center has certain duties including:

- identifying and making available best practices research;
- considering various race ethnicities, religions, sexualities, and genders when developing and identifying resources;
- developing and maintaining a website;
- developing a continuum of training materials;
- training facilitators;
- providing technical assistance and other functions; and
- soliciting advice from a variety of stakeholders.

Beginning September 1, 2020, and biannually thereafter, OSPI must report on the effectiveness of the center and provide recommendations.

Professional Development and Training. Professional development regarding equity, diversity, and inclusion is incorporated into existing cultural competency training.

School Board Directors. WSSDA, in consultation with the center, must develop this training for school board of directors. The training must instruct school board directors on examining school district policies with an equity lens and how to use data to identify disproportionate outcomes. WSSDA must provide ongoing training to school board members.

School and District Staff. Within amounts appropriated from state and federal sources, ESDs and school districts must provide job-embedded, ongoing training opportunities for all staff, from classified staff to the superintendent, to gain knowledge and skills in these topics. They must consider using facilitators trained by the center.

School Districts Identified for Improvement. The statute that strongly encourages certain districts identified for improvement to provide cultural competency professional development and training is repealed.

Appropriation: The bill contains a section or sections to limit implementation to the availability of amounts appropriated for that specific purpose.

Fiscal Note: Available (partial).

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

Effective Date: The bill contains several effective dates. Please refer to the bill.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Washington classrooms are becoming increasingly more diverse, and teachers do not reflect the student population. Systemic changes need to address this reality, and training needs to be statewide and for all K-12 staff. Bias can manifest both implicitly and explicitly, which impacts actions and decisions. Bias is present when screening students for highly capable programs and special education. Recognizing this bias and being culturally aware can reduce the disproportionate impacts in schools. Cultural competence is the ability to successfully teach students who are from a culture different than the teacher. When school staff are culturally aware and responsive, relationships with students are stronger, school climate is more positive, and academic outcomes are improved. Professional development needs to be ongoing and deeply embedded. This bill will help all students feel welcome and ready to succeed. This bill will help recruit and retain teachers of color. OSPI does not need a separate center to do this work.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Mona Das, Prime Sponsor; Glenn Jenkins, Teacher, Auburn School District; Lorrell Noahr, Washington Education Association; Clifford Traisman, Highline and Seattle Public Schools; Marissa Rathbone, Washington State School Directors' Association; Eileen Yoshina, Director of Equity in Education, Puget Sound Educational Service District; Julia Warth, League of Education Voters; Maria Flores, OSPI.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.