

FINAL BILL REPORT

ESSB 5044

C 197 L 21
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Concerning professional learning, equity, cultural competency, and dismantling institutional racism in the public school system.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators Das, Wellman, Darneille, Hasegawa, Hunt, Lovelett, Nguyen, Nobles, Robinson, Saldaña, Stanford and Wilson, C.).

Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education
House Committee on Education
House Committee on Appropriations

Background: Cultural Competency Standards. The Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) adopted a set of standards for effective teaching. When developing the standards, PESB incorporated standards for cultural competency along the career 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.

Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee. In 2009, the Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee (EOGOAC) was created to synthesize the findings and recommendations from achievement gap studies and recommend policies and strategies to close the achievement gap.

Office of Equity. In 2020, the Office of Equity was established in the Office of the Governor to promote access to equitable opportunities and resources that reduce disparities and improve outcomes statewide across state government.

Professional Development and Training. In 2016, the Legislature directed the creation of

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cultural competency professional development and training for different groups.

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

School and District Staff. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (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 professional development and training.

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

Professional Learning Days. Professional learning means a comprehensive, sustained, job-embedded, and collaborative approach to improve teachers' and principals' effectiveness in raising student achievement.

Beginning in the 2018-19 school year, the Legislature began phasing in funding for professional learning days for certificated instructional staff. At a minimum, the state was required to allocate funding for:

- one day in the 2018-19 school year;
- two days in the 2019-20 school year; and
- three days in the 2020-21 school year.

The 2020 supplemental budget required one professional learning day to be used to train school district staff on racial literacy, cultural responsiveness, and stereotype threat for closing persistent opportunity gaps.

Summary: Cultural Competency, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Standards. WSSDA must develop cultural competency, diversity, equity, and inclusion (CCDEI) standards for school director governance and post it on its website at no cost. PESB must develop or update CCDEI standards of practice for preparation, continuing education, and other training of school district staff and post it on its website. WSSDA and PESB must collaborate to compare and align CCDEI standards. EOGOAC must, and the Office of Equity may, review the CCDEI standards.

References to cultural competency standards are updated to refer to the CCDEI standards for educator preparation and certification programs; paraeducator preparation and certificate programs; and the professional development program to support implementation of the Teacher Principal Evaluation System.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are defined as follows:

- diversity describes the presence of similarities and differences within a given setting, collective, or group based on multiple factors including race and ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability status, age, educational status, religion, geography, primary language, culture, and other characteristics and experiences;
- equity includes developing, strengthening, and supporting procedural and outcome fairness in systems, procedures, and resource distribution mechanisms to create equitable opportunities for all individuals, and also includes eliminating barriers that prevent the full participation of individuals and groups; and
- inclusion describes intentional efforts and consistent sets of actions to create and sustain a sense of respect, belonging, safety, and attention to individual needs and backgrounds that ensure full access to engagement and participation in available activities and opportunities.

By November 1, 2030, and every ten years thereafter, WSSDA and PESB must review the definitions and report any recommendations for revising the definitions to the Legislature.

Professional Development and Training. Professional development and training regarding CCDEI standards replaces existing cultural competency training.

School Board Directors. WSSDA must identify or develop and periodically update governance training programs that align with the CCDEI standards for school director governance. The training programs must include certain topics.

Beginning with the 2022 calendar year, WSSDA must provide a governance training program. Each member of a board of directors must complete the program once per term of elected office, except that newly elected directors must complete a governance training program within two years of election.

School District Staff and Superintendents. PESB must identify or develop and periodically update, training programs for school district staff and superintendents that align with the CCDEI standards of practice. The training programs must include certain elements.

When establishing policies and requirements for the preparation and certification of educators, PESB must require that the programs of courses, requirements, and other activities leading to educator certification align with the CCDEI standards.

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 along with other redundant statutes.

Professional Learning Days. In the 2021-22 school year, school districts must use one of the professional learning days to train school district staff in one or more of the following topics: cultural competency, diversity, equity, or inclusion.

Beginning in the 2023-24 school year, and every other school year thereafter, school districts must use one of the professional learning days to provide a CCDEI training program to school district staff. School district staff includes classified staff, certificated instructional staff, certificated administrative staff, and superintendents.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	30	19	
House	57	40	(House amended)
Senate	29	19	(Senate concurred)

Effective: July 25, 2021