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**SENATE BILL 6275**

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**State of Washington 68th Legislature 2024 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Nobles, C. Wilson, Hunt, Kuderer, Liias, Lovelett, Lovick, Nguyen, Salomon, Stanford, Trudeau, and Valdez

AN ACT Relating to identifying African American studies curricula for students in grades seven through 12; creating new sections; and providing an expiration date.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The legislature finds that the contributions, achievements, culture, characteristics, and issues of people of African descent is American history and that African American studies is an interdisciplinary academic field that encompasses the history, politics, culture, contributions, and achievements of people of African descent in the United States and throughout the African diaspora. The legislature acknowledges that this field of study expands the educational lens to include multicultural approaches to learning as well as new and enhanced historical narratives. The legislature recognizes that seeing themselves represented through a multidimensional and asset-based educational program has a positive impact on the identity, self-worth, academic engagement, and sense of belonging of African American students, and that students of all backgrounds and ethnicities deserve to learn about the contributions of African Americans to the United States and to the world.

(2)(a) The legislature acknowledges that legislation enacted in 2020 directed the office of the superintendent of public instruction to convene a work group to develop recommendations for integrating African American history, examinations of racism, and the history of the civil rights movement into existing social studies curriculum provided to students in grades seven through 12. The legislation specified that the work group must review pertinent curriculum that is available to school districts, and must include recommendations for the professional development needed to support educators in providing the instruction to students.

(b) The legislature recognizes that legislation enacted in 2021 directed the office of the superintendent of public instruction to engage community members and key interested parties to develop a clear definition and framework of African American studies to guide instruction in grades seven through 12, develop a plan for aligning African American studies across all content areas, and identify related professional development opportunities.

(c) The legislature further finds that because the traditional education system has focused so heavily on a eurocentric worldview, more work needs to be done to thoughtfully and thoroughly prepare public schools and educators in Washington to offer this rich field of African American studies to its students.

(3) Therefore, the legislature intends to direct the office of the superintendent of public instruction to convene a work group to identify African American studies curricula in use in high schools and colleges throughout the country and to report the list of curricula to the legislature. The goal of the legislature is that public schools in Washington will select a curriculum from the list and use it to offer African American studies to students in grades seven through 12.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) As used in this section, "African American studies" means an interdisciplinary approach, with the rigors of scholarly inquiry, to analyze the history, culture, and contributions of the people of African descent in the United States and throughout the African diaspora.

(2) The office of the superintendent of public instruction shall convene a work group to identify African American studies curricula and other instructional methods and materials for students in grades seven through 12.

(3) In identifying curricula and other instructional methods and materials, the work group must:

(a) Review the report supported by funding under section 501(4)(o), chapter 334, Laws of 2021;

(b) Connect with faculty at historically black colleges and universities; and

(c) Survey high school and college African American studies courses and programs, including by connecting with faculty at historically black colleges and universities.

(4) At a minimum, the membership of the work group must include:

(a) A representative from each of the following entities:

(i) The Washington state commission on African American affairs;

(ii) The educational opportunity gap oversight and accountability committee;

(iii) A statewide organization representing teachers;

(iv) A statewide organization representing principals;

(v) The educational service district serving the most students;

(vi) A community education group;

(vii) A faith-based community organization;

(viii) The national urban league; and

(ix) The national association for the advancement of colored people; and

(b) At least one individual who meets each of the following requirements:

(i) A dean of education from a state institution of higher education;

(ii) A student leader in a public middle or high school; and

(iii) A family member or guardian of a public school student who is invested in the leadership of the school.

(5) By December 1, 2024, and in accordance with RCW 43.01.036, the office of the superintendent of public instruction shall report to the appropriate committees of the legislature with a summary of the activities conducted by the work group and with the list of identified African American studies curricula and other instructional methods and materials for students in grades seven through 12.

(6) This section expires August 1, 2025.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  Black education matters.

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