

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5177

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As of January 23, 2025

**Title:** An act relating to considering the experiences of historically marginalized and underrepresented groups when identifying professional development resources on certain topics.

**Brief Description:** Considering the experiences of historically marginalized and underrepresented groups when identifying professional development resources on certain topics.

**Sponsors:** Senators Nobles, Wilson, C., Hasegawa, Lovelett, Orwall, Trudeau and Valdez.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/23/25.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Specifies that the professional development resources that the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction provides on certain topics must consider the experiences of historically marginalized and underrepresented groups.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

**Staff:** Ailey Kato (786-7434)

**Background:** State law requires school districts to use one of their three professional learning days to train staff in one or more of the following topics every other school year:

- social-emotional learning;
- trauma-informed practices;
- recognition and response to emotional or behavioral distress;
- consideration of adverse childhood experiences;
- mental health literacy;

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- antibullying strategies; and
- culturally sustaining practices.

In 2019, subject to appropriations, OSPI was directed to create and publish on its website a list of resources available for professional development of school district staff on these topics.

OSPI must include the professional development opportunities and resources identified by the Social-Emotional Learning Committee.

By June 1, 2025, the Washington State School Directors' Association, with the assistance of the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), must review and update a model policy and procedure regarding course design, selection, and adoption of instructional materials.

The model policy and procedure must require that school district boards of directors, within available materials, adopt inclusive curricula and select diverse, equitable, inclusive, age-appropriate instructional materials that include the histories, contributions, and perspectives of historically marginalized and underrepresented groups including, but not limited to, people from various racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds, people with differing learning needs, people with disabilities, LGBTQ people, and people with various socioeconomic and immigration backgrounds.

By October 1, 2025, school district boards of directors, charter school boards, and state-tribal education compact schools must amend their policies and procedures to conform with the model.

**Summary of Bill:** The professional development resources that OSPI must provide on certain topics must consider the experiences of historically marginalized and underrepresented groups including, but not limited to, students' experiences with:

- sensory, mental, and physical disabilities;
- neurodivergence;
- gender identity and gender expression;
- sexual orientation;
- homelessness;
- race and ethnicity;
- religion;
- national origin; and
- immigration status.

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

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: Every student deserves to feel seen, heard, supported, and valued. Educators need the right tools to understand and meet the needs of all students, including those with historically marginalized identities. The resources that OSPI is identifying need to have all students in mind, so all students can thrive. There are high rates of suicide for students who are neurodivergent. Many people assume the way they live their life is the only way. Teachers do not need to be mental health experts but they need basic tools that can save a child's life and not cause harm. Students struggle with their academics if they feel alone. This bill will help educators be the best that they can be.

CON: Professional development is part of a teacher's contract. This professional development can be demanding, time consuming, and not relevant to all students and all districts. Many teachers feel that DEI initiatives have over-extended into social issues, prioritizes ideology over essential skills, and leads to burnout. There needs to be a balance between growing a teacher's skills and not feeling overwhelmed by hours of DEI training. This bill will lead to an over-emphasis on social issues at the expense of educational outcomes.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator T'wina Nobles, Prime Sponsor; Ramona Hattendorf; Samantha Fogg, Seattle Council PTSA Co-President; Jaanvi Ganapathy, Legislative Youth Advisory Council (LYAC).

CON: Rhonda Looney; Jeannie Magdua, Conservative Ladies of Washington.

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