
SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 2262

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2026 Regular Session

By House Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Connors, Rude, Schmidt, Klicker, Graham, Barnard, and Pollet)

READ FIRST TIME 02/04/26.

1 AN ACT Relating to civics education for public school students
2 through instruction and information about the production and use of
3 official signatures; amending RCW 28A.230.094 and 29A.60.300; and
4 creating a new section.

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

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that advances in
7 technology, evolving instructional priorities, and limited classroom
8 time have led to a decline in the teaching of cursive handwriting and
9 signature development in public schools. Because Washington state
10 does not require cursive instruction, many students complete their
11 education without learning how to sign their names in a clear,
12 distinctive, and consistent manner.

13 (2) The legislature also finds that when students are not taught
14 how to develop and consistently reproduce a distinctive signature,
15 they may face avoidable challenges in voting, entering into legal
16 agreements, and conducting everyday civic and financial affairs. The
17 legislature further finds that a legible and repeatable handwritten
18 signature remains an essential life skill and a foundational element
19 of civic participation. Despite the growth of electronic signatures,
20 many important documents in Washington still require an original, wet
21 ink signature to verify identity and intent. These documents include,

1 but are not limited to, ballots, initiatives, voter registration
2 forms, and other official documents that are required at the state
3 and federal level. For many young people, the lack of a consistent
4 signature can create barriers to fully exercising their rights and
5 responsibilities.

6 (3) Therefore, the legislature, through education and reporting
7 requirements, intends to promote instruction that equips public
8 school students with the ability to sign their names legibly and
9 consistently as a practical life skill and as a matter of civic
10 education, helping ensure that future generations are prepared to
11 participate in our democratic process and in the legal and economic
12 life of our state.

13 **Sec. 2.** RCW 28A.230.094 and 2025 c 369 s 203 are each amended to
14 read as follows:

15 (1)(a) Beginning with or before the 2020-21 school year, each
16 school district that operates a high school must provide a mandatory
17 one-half credit stand-alone course in civics for each high school
18 student. Except as provided by (c) of this subsection, civics content
19 and instruction embedded in other social studies courses do not
20 satisfy the requirements of this subsection.

21 (b) Credit awarded to students who complete the civics course
22 must be applied to course credit requirements in social studies that
23 are required for high school graduation.

24 (c) Civics content and instruction required by this section may
25 be embedded in social studies courses that offer students the
26 opportunity to earn both high school and postsecondary credit.

27 (2) The content of the civics course must include, but is not
28 limited to:

29 (a) Federal, state, tribal, and local government organization and
30 procedures;

31 (b) Rights and responsibilities of citizens addressed in the
32 Washington state and United States Constitutions, including the
33 statement of student rights and materials delineated in RCW
34 28A.230.005;

35 (c) Current issues addressed at each level of government;

36 (d) Electoral issues, including elections, ballot measures,
37 initiatives, and referenda;

1 (e) The study and completion of the civics component of the
2 federally administered naturalization test required of persons
3 seeking to become naturalized United States citizens; (~~and~~)

4 (f) The importance in a free society of living the basic values
5 and character traits specified in RCW 28A.150.211; and

6 (g) Beginning with or before the 2027-28 school year, instruction
7 in producing a legible, repeatable official cursive signature, and
8 how signatures are used by election officials in election,
9 initiative, referenda, and recall processes. For purposes of this
10 subsection (g), a student's signature may be a personalized,
11 handwritten signature or mark that aligns with the student's primary
12 language or culture. Instruction provided in accordance with this
13 subsection (g) should include a historical overview of signatures in
14 a civics context, including how signature practices and exclusions
15 have limited civic participation by historically marginalized
16 communities. The development of curriculum for use in the instruction
17 may be coordinated with the office of the secretary of state and
18 county auditors in accordance with the community outreach plan
19 required by RCW 29A.60.168. Nothing in this subsection (g) requires a
20 student to produce a legible, repeatable official cursive signature
21 as a condition for earning credit for the course required by this
22 section.

23 (3) By September 1, 2020, the office of the superintendent of
24 public instruction, in collaboration with the Washington state
25 association of county auditors and a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization
26 engaged in voter outreach and increasing voter participation, shall
27 identify and make available civics materials and resources for use in
28 courses under this section. The materials and resources must be
29 posted on the office of the superintendent of public instruction's
30 website.

31 **Sec. 3.** RCW 29A.60.300 and 2016 c 134 s 3 are each amended to
32 read as follows:

33 (1) Every odd-numbered year, the secretary of state must conduct
34 and publish a statewide survey of voted ballot rejection rates and
35 the reasons for those rejections by county auditors and canvassing
36 boards. The secretary of state must collect data from reconciliation
37 reports and county auditors in order to compare county and statewide
38 averages for rates of rejected ballots and reasons for those ballots
39 being rejected. The data collected must include rejection rates and

1 reasons for rejection of voted ballots for all elections, including
2 the number and rates of ballots that were rejected for signature
3 mismatch by voter age groupings. The survey must include an analysis
4 of current practices by county auditors and canvassing boards in the
5 acceptance and rejection of ballots, and include recommendations for
6 improvements that minimize rejections in those practices, with a goal
7 of statewide standardization where applicable. The results must also
8 be analyzed and compared with available national data and recognized
9 best practices. The secretary of state's recommendations and reports
10 must be made available to the public and provided to the office of
11 the superintendent of public instruction for inclusion in their
12 website content pertaining to civic education.

13 (2) Any elections reports for the state that are published
14 annually by the secretary of state must: (a) Include the number and
15 rates of ballots that were rejected for signature mismatch by voter
16 age groupings; and (b) be provided to the office of the
17 superintendent of public instruction for inclusion in their website
18 content pertaining to civic education.

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