
SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5574

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2026 Regular Session

By Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators Nobles, Trudeau, Cortes, Frame, Kauffman, Lias, Lovelett, Lovick, Orwall, Riccelli, Stanford, Torres, Valdez, and C. Wilson)

READ FIRST TIME 01/22/26.

1 AN ACT Relating to instruction on Asian American and Native
2 Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Latino American, and Black American
3 history in public schools; adding a new section to chapter 28A.320
4 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 28A.230 RCW; and creating new
5 sections.

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

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that:

8 (a) The contributions of generations of Asian American and Native
9 Hawaiian/Pacific Islander communities have enriched and strengthened
10 this state and nation. Washington is the proud home of the seventh
11 largest Asian American population and third largest Pacific Islander
12 population in the nation, which make up nearly 12 percent of our
13 state's population. Asian American and Native Hawaiian/Pacific
14 Islander residents have made valuable contributions to all areas of
15 Washington, including in government, business, arts and sciences,
16 medicine, law enforcement, and the military;

17 (b) Yet, Washington state has seen an increase in hate crimes and
18 violence against historically marginalized groups, two-thirds of
19 which are based on race or ethnicity. During the COVID-19 pandemic,
20 over 12,000 acts of harassment, discrimination, and violence, toward
21 Asian Americans and Native Hawaiians/Pacific Islanders, were reported

1 and Washington state was found to have the third-highest number of
2 reported incidents in the nation. Such acts of hate and violence
3 continue to be reported each year. According to local and national
4 surveys, there has been a particularly significant rise in Asian
5 American and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander youth experiencing
6 bullying and racism;

7 (c) Regardless of one's background, every student in Washington
8 state has a right to feel safe at school and in their communities;

9 (d) Teaching students about Asian American and Native Hawaiian/
10 Pacific Islander history and contributions is an important response
11 to the hateful rhetoric and violence the Asian American and Native
12 Hawaiian/Pacific Islander community has experienced in recent years,
13 and a preventive measure to guard against such rhetoric and violence
14 in the future. Too often, Asian Americans are viewed as either the
15 "model minority" or "perpetual foreigner," or both, and omitted from
16 ethnic studies, United States history, and Washington history
17 curricula and instruction altogether. For Native Hawaiians/Pacific
18 Islanders, many of these traditionally overburdened communities have
19 been defined, excluded, and underserved by systems and institutions
20 for decades;

21 (e) The Black American community has played a critical role in
22 shaping the political, economic, cultural, and social foundations of
23 the United States, which is essential for every Washington state
24 student to know. From the forced labor that built early American
25 infrastructure, to the intellectual, artistic, and scientific
26 achievements that continue to influence the nation, Black American
27 history is inseparable from the broader story of American democracy.
28 Yet despite its centrality, Black American history has historically
29 been ignored, minimized, distorted, or relegated to a narrow set of
30 narratives that fail to capture the depth, diversity, and ongoing
31 impact of Black communities. Ensuring students learn a comprehensive
32 and historically accurate account of Black American history is
33 critical to understanding the development of the nation and the
34 shared struggles, movements, and contributions that shape our
35 present;

36 (f) Latino American history is an integral part of the story of
37 the United States and of Washington state. Latino communities,
38 including Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central and South American,
39 Afro-Latino, and indigenous Latin American populations, have
40 contributed significantly to our economic development, labor

1 movements, military service, arts, sciences, civic leadership, and
2 cultural richness. Their histories illuminate the evolution of
3 industries, such as agriculture, transportation, technology, and
4 education, and their experiences shed light on key civil rights
5 struggles that have helped define modern American democracy. Ensuring
6 that students learn this history allows them to understand the
7 interconnected nature of our shared past and the contributions that
8 have shaped the communities they live in today;

9 (g) Consistent with RCW 28A.655.300, it is important for public
10 school students to be global citizens in a global society with an
11 appreciation for the contributions of diverse cultures. Research has
12 shown that using comprehensive and historically accurate curricula
13 that include historically marginalized and underrepresented groups
14 helps address lack of representation or misrepresentation, and leads
15 to positive changes in students' attitudes, values, empathy,
16 participation, academic performance, and attendance rates;

17 (h) Comprehensive instruction around history that includes Asian
18 American and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Latino American, and
19 Black American histories is a key strategy for reducing racial bias
20 and addressing the root causes of discrimination affecting multiple
21 communities. Research demonstrates that when students learn about the
22 interconnected histories of racialized groups, especially their
23 shared experiences through systems of law, labor, migration,
24 activism, and cultural exchange, they develop stronger cross-cultural
25 understanding and are less likely to adopt harmful stereotypes.
26 Providing students with this fuller historical context supports safe
27 learning environments while reinforcing a shared civic identity
28 grounded in truth and collective responsibility; and

29 (i) By equipping young people with an honest, multiperspective
30 understanding of our state and nation, Washington prepares students
31 to recognize misinformation, challenge prejudice, and participate
32 meaningfully in a diverse democracy. Instruction that reflects the
33 full breadth of our collective history is not only academically
34 beneficial, it is fundamental to building a more just, cohesive, and
35 resilient society.

36 (2) Accordingly, and with the support of Asian American and
37 Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Latino, Black, and other community-
38 based organizations, the legislature intends for education regarding
39 the history of Asian Americans and Native Hawaiians/Pacific

1 Islanders, Latino Americans, and Black Americans, be mandatory in
2 Washington's common schools.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.320
4 RCW to read as follows:

5 (1) By September 1, 2028, or after the superintendent of public
6 instruction adopts revised social studies learning standards,
7 whichever comes later, each school district shall adopt a policy
8 ensuring that instruction in Asian American and Native Hawaiian/
9 Pacific Islander, Latino American, and Black American history is
10 included in one or more required social studies courses when the
11 district reviews or adopts its social studies curriculum during its
12 regular curriculum review cycle.

13 (2) Policies adopted under this section must align with revised
14 social studies learning standards adopted under RCW 28A.655.070 and
15 the policies adopted under RCW 28A.345.130.

16 (3) Each school district shall post the adopted policy on the
17 district website within 30 days of school board approval.

18 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.230
19 RCW to read as follows:

20 (1) Beginning in the 2029-30 school year, each school district
21 shall provide instruction in grades K-12 consistent with the policies
22 adopted under section 2 of this act, particularly when the topic
23 aligns with existing frameworks of United States history and
24 Washington state history.

25 (2) When providing instruction under this section, school
26 districts may use ethnic studies materials and resources as made
27 available under RCW 28A.300.112, or other existing and appropriate
28 public or private materials, personnel, and resources, provided that
29 they align with the revised social studies learning standards adopted
30 by the office of the superintendent of public instruction under RCW
31 28A.655.070 and the policies adopted under RCW 28A.345.130.

32 (3) A school district may accept gifts, grants, and donations,
33 including in-kind donations, related to instruction under this
34 section.

35 (4) Beginning June 30, 2030, and by each June 30th thereafter,
36 each school district shall provide a report to the state board of
37 education, the office of the superintendent of public instruction,
38 and the Washington state school directors' association, that the

1 district is offering the instruction required under this section, and
2 that the program of instruction is planned, ongoing, and systematic.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** Nothing in this act supersedes the use of
4 the John McCoy (lulilaš) since time immemorial curriculum developed
5 and required under RCW 28A.320.170(1)(b). This act is supplementary
6 to, and does not supersede, the ethnic studies materials and
7 resources for public school students referenced in RCW 28A.655.300
8 and 28A.300.112.

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