



EQUITY EFFORTS IN OLYMPIA

A look at the 2020 Legislature’s impact on equity for every student

Roz Thompson

Advocacy and Governmental Relations Director, AWSP

PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Creating a Culture, Ensuring School Safety, Planning with Data, Aligning Curriculum, Improving Instruction, Managing Resources, Engaging Families and Communities, Closing the Gap

Since 2017, AWSP has been working hard to achieve the three goals of our strategic plan. One goal is related to principal support, another is related to ensuring the health of our association, and our first goal is related to equity. This goal states that AWSP will, “lead on diversity and equity issues for historically underserved populations and use an equity lens to best serve all of our members.”

So how well have we been leading on equity issues and using an equity lens as it relates to education policy? For the past several legislative sessions, lawmakers have approved bills intended to change inequitable systems and provide more support for

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groups that have been marginalized. One of the most significant bills was HB 1541, which passed in 2016. This bill has many pieces to it, but in part it added professional development in cultural competency and prompted the changes to discipline laws with the goal of reducing suspensions and expulsions. In 2019, HB 1621 passed which said that for people applying to teacher preparation programs, achieving a minimum score on the WEST-B was no longer required for admission because the current test

was biased. SB 5290 also passed last year and, over the next few years, intends to help eliminate detention as an option for students who engage in non-criminal offenses.

Taking an equity stance on more issues continued this session. Here is a look at some of the bills that passed this year with our support that will help change systems that may have been historically bad for students.

2SHB 1191 | CONCERNING SCHOOL NOTIFICATIONS

In response to two state audits, this bill will streamline the notifications process from various entities such as juvenile courts to school districts. Superintendents will first receive the notifications and will then get the information to the appropriate building principal. Principals then have the discretion with whom to share this information.

Several RCWs included in this bill were out of date or in conflict with other RCWs so it was important to get this bill passed. In addition to these updates, concern over stigmatizing or labeling students who return to the school setting after an adjudication was expressed. After many meetings with a wide range of stakeholders, including students, the final bill is a compromise with regards to the information that superintendents and principals will receive. Notifications for drug, sex, firearm, or violent offenses will be included. The bill will discontinue notifications to schools related to diversions, the unlawful inhalation of toxic fumes, and liquor violations. WSSDA will be creating a model policy and procedure related to this bill.

EHSB 2251 | PERMITTING STUDENTS TO WEAR TRADITIONAL TRIBAL REGALIA AT GRADUATION CEREMONIES

Beginning with the class of 2020, school districts, public schools, and institutions of higher education may not prohibit students who are members of a federally recognized tribe from wearing tribal regalia or objects of Native American cultural significance along with or attached to a gown at graduation ceremonies or related events. Districts, public schools, and public institutions may not require these students to wear a cap if it is incompatible with the



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regalia or significant object. The bill recognizes the nation-to-nation relationship between tribes and the state government.

3SHB 1660 | CONCERNING THE PARTICIPATION OF STUDENTS WHO ARE LOW INCOME IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Following last year’s budget requirement that schools collect and publish data related to high school possession of Associated Student Body (ASB) cards and student participation in athletic programs, this bill now codifies this practice into law. Schools are now required to analyze this data, set goals, and implement plans related to any opportunity gaps that may exist for students. School boards are directed to adopt a policy and regulations for waiving attendance and extracurricular participation fees for students who are low income. Our Association of Washington Student Leaders (AWSL) staff encourages schools and districts to include students in this process and can provide guidance on what this might look like.

SB 6066 | EXPANDING ETHNIC STUDIES MATERIALS AND RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS IN GRADES K-6

Public schools with students in grades K-6 are encouraged to incorporate materials and resources related to ethnic studies. By Sept. 1, 2021, OSPI must identify existing state learning standards addressing knowledge and skills all public school students

need to be global citizens in a global society. An OSPI advisory committee currently exists related to ethnic studies in grades 7-12 and will be expanded to include educators with experience in age-appropriate ethnic studies curricula. AWSP members serve on this committee.

These are just a few of the bills that passed the Legislature that relate to creating equity for each and every student. More work is needed and more is coming next session. For example, SB 6262 would require districts to incorporate the Since Time Immemorial curriculum into all social studies classes. Since it did not pass this year, I would expect it to return in 2021. Also, in the final report of the Staffing Enrichments Work Group coordinated by OSPI, the recommendation is made to “provide required professional development for all staff ensuring key topics of racial literacy and cultural responsiveness are included to help with the elimination of opportunity gaps.” AWSP played a prominent role in shaping the outcomes of this workgroup. This report, including its recommendations to change the prototypical funding model, will play a significant part in next year’s legislative session.

For a more complete list of all of the bills that passed this legislative session, check out our website. ■