
OLR Bill Analysis

sSB 1020

AN ACT CONCERNING THE INCLUSION OF INSTRUCTION IN CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY AND PRACTICE IN THE PRESERVICE TRAINING, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND IN-SERVICE TRAINING PROVIDED TO TEACHERS.

SUMMARY

This bill changes the term “cultural competency” to “culturally responsive pedagogy and practice” in laws addressing required:

1. teacher preparation training,
2. special education coursework necessary to qualify for an initial educator certification, and
3. instruction in an alternate route to certification (ARC).

It also adds culturally responsive pedagogy and practice to the teacher professional development and in-service training that boards of education are required to provide for their teachers.

The bill does not define culturally responsive pedagogy and practice. The term has been interpreted in some settings to include understanding students' cultural references and including them in all aspects of learning (see BACKGROUND).

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2019

§ 3 – TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS

Under current law, each person in a teacher preparation program that leads to teacher certification is required to complete training in a number of areas including cultural competency. Training in cultural competency includes instruction about the awareness of students' background and experience that develops skills, knowledge, and behaviors that enable educators and students to build positive

relationships and effectively work in cross-cultural situations. The bill replaces the term “cultural competency” with “culturally responsive pedagogy and practices” effective July 1, 2019.

§§ 4 & 5 – TEACHER CERTIFICATION AND ARC PROGRAM

Under current law, to be eligible for an initial teacher certification, each person must complete a course or courses of study in special education that includes instruction on a number of topics including cultural competencies. The bill changes this to culturally responsive pedagogy and practice for anyone seeking certification on or after July 1, 2019.

The bill makes a similar change to the requirements of the ARC program that the State Department of Education develops for persons from alternate professions. By law alternate professions include paraeducators, charter school teachers, veterans, and former college professors.

§§ 1 & 2 – PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND IN-SERVICES TRAINING

The bill adds culturally responsive pedagogy and practice to the teacher professional development and in-services training that boards of education are required to provide.

By law, boards must provide at least 18 hours of professional development at no cost to the teachers. The professional development program must meet a number of criteria set in law, including focusing on refining and improving various effective teaching methods and aligning with rigorous state student academic achievement standards. The bill adds training in culturally responsive pedagogy and practice to the existing requirements starting with the 2019-2020 school year.

The in-service training program boards are required to provide must include providing information on, to name a few examples, (1) the impact of alcohol and drugs on health and personality development and discouraging their abuse; (2) health and mental health risk-reduction education, which includes the prevention of risk-taking behavior in children; (3) school violence prevention, conflict

resolution, the identification and prevention of, and response to, youth suicide and bullying; and (4) CPR and other life-saving procedures. The bill adds culturally responsive pedagogy and practice to the list of requirements.

BACKGROUND

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

According to the Education Alliance at Brown University:

[Culture] plays a role not only in communicating and receiving information, but also in shaping the thinking process of groups and individuals. A pedagogy that acknowledges, responds to, and celebrates fundamental cultures offers full, equitable access to education for students from all cultures.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Education Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 34 Nay 0 (03/15/2019)