



ESSB 5044 & WSSDA Equity Training for School Directors and Boards FACT SHEET • June 2021

1. What is ESSB 5044?

ESSB 5044 (which created a new section of 28.345 RCW) titled *AN ACT Relating to equity, cultural competency, and dismantling institutional racism in the public school system*, is a bill passed by the Washington state legislature and signed into law by the governor in April 2021. Among other things, the law requires WSSDA to identify or develop and periodically update governance training programs that align with Cultural Competency, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion standards for school director governance. **This bill has no component of training or curriculum for students.**

2. How is WSSDA responding to the requirements within ESSB 5044?

WSSDA has supported school directors and boards for many years in their goal to seek educational equity for their students and close opportunity gaps within their districts and across the state. WSSDA's OnBoard Professional Learning System for School Directors and School Boards weaves equity across all areas of training, from finance to strategic planning to district oversight. Additionally, the OnBoard framework includes specific trainings that explore what equity means, how it differs from equality, why it creates better student outcomes, and what the role of the board is in moving towards equity.

By the end of 2021, there will be multiple training opportunities for school directors to become more knowledgeable about equity, diversity, inclusion and cultural proficiency that will meet the requirements of ESSB 5044.

3. What is included in these WSSDA OnBoard trainings?

The training provides opportunities for school directors to increase their personal cultural proficiency, understand the terminology, and learn about the impacts of equity, diversity and inclusion on student outcomes. Training focuses on the role of the school board and how, through policies and practices, school directors can use their leadership position in education to close the gaps in various success factors for their students.

4. Who is creating the training to fulfill ESSB 5044?

WSSDA is creating the training for school directors. ESSB 5044 also calls for the training of school district staff and superintendents. Other groups are responsible for training for other education groups.

5. What do the terms equity, diversity and inclusion (sometimes referred to as DEI) and cultural competency mean?

Those terms are defined in ESSB 5044 as follows:

- **Diversity** describes the presence of similarities and differences within a given setting, collective, or group based on multiple factors including race and ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability status, age, educational status, religion, geography, primary language, culture, and other characteristics and experiences;
- **Equity** includes developing, strengthening, and supporting procedural and outcome fairness in systems, procedures, and resource distribution mechanisms to create equitable opportunities for all

individuals, and also includes eliminating barriers that prevent the full participation of individuals and groups; and

- **Inclusion** describes intentional efforts and consistent sets of actions to create and sustain a sense of respect, belonging, safety, and attention to individual needs and backgrounds that ensure full access to engagement and participation in available activities and opportunities.
- **Cultural Competency** includes knowledge of student cultural histories and contexts, as well as family norms and values in different cultures; knowledge and skills in accessing community resources and community and parent outreach; and skills in adapting instruction to students' experiences and identifying cultural contexts for individual students. **Culturally Competent** educational leaders have a mindset and behaviors that enable them to foster policies and practices that provide the opportunity to effectively engage with and serve diverse students, educators and community members.

6. Is critical race theory included in the training topics/required in ESSB 5044?

Critical race theory is not named in ESSB 5044, nor is any specific curriculum.

Still under development, WSSDA's equity trainings will include learning experiences organized around the concepts and practices of educational equity as they relate to the role of school directors, including:

1. Promoting educational diversity and inclusion
2. Developing cultural proficiency as an education leader
3. Addressing equitable educational opportunities and closing opportunity gaps
4. Understanding and dismantling institutional discrimination and racism in the educational system