

Senate Bill 5813
Testimony 2/5/07
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Senator McAuliffe and members of the Senate Early Learning and K-12 Education Committee. My name is Bev Young Reed and I am here this afternoon on behalf of the Washington State PTA and its 150,000 members across the state. Mathematics and science education is a main concern of the PTA. We have closely monitored the work of Washington Learns and are pleased that math and science have been made priorities by you and by the Governor. We believe that Senate Bill 5813 is a significant step toward improving math and science education in our schools.

Here is what we have learned:

1. Recent WASL scores are strong evidence that math and science programs must be strengthened state-wide. When the data is disaggregated by race, poverty, and student need, the numbers are lower.
2. There is a large gender gap in math and science that must also be addressed. Without incentives and modeling, the gender gap continues to exist.
3. The performance of students in the United States in mathematics and science is worsening in comparison to same-age students from other developed, affluent nations. It is critical for our students to leave school prepared to thrive in a knowledge based economy. Our economy will be strengthened by improvements in these areas.
4. Our State businesses report that they cannot find job applicants with the appropriate math skills needed to do entry-level jobs.

These facts are important when evaluating the many bills you will be considering on math and science this session. Senate Bill 5813 is a step that we support. Improving the skills of teachers in mathematics and science is important and we support the idea of instructional coaches and the loan programs for professional development in these areas. Furthermore, we support the after-school mathematics support program to provide additional support to struggling students. The State Board of Education review is a good idea. We would also support efforts to involve parents in all aspects of curriculum adoption as well as efforts to allow high school students to take at least three years of science and four years of high school mathematics.

PTA members feel strongly about improving mathematics and science education in our schools. We look forward to working with you on this and the other legislation you will be considering. Thank you for your time.