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Governor



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To the Honorable President and Members,
The Senate of the State of Washington

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am returning, without my approval as to Sections 6, 11, 12 and 13, Engrossed Second Substitute Senate Bill 6673 entitled:

"AN ACT Relating to learning opportunities to assist students to obtain a high school diploma."

Engrossed Second Substitute Senate Bill 6673 provides support for students in need of additional time or assistance to meet state academic standards and graduation requirements. Key components of this bill enhance the Learning Assistance Program, assure parent notification of student progress, and explore on-line curriculum support in languages other than English and build teacher instructional capacity. This bill also creates a number of new programs.

Section 6 creates a new duty for school districts to provide all tenth graders enrolled in the district the option of taking the PSAT at no cost to the student. While this test may provide students some information regarding their readiness for the SAT and college preparedness, there has not been coordination with the other college readiness assessment work already in progress, specifically work being done in mathematics.

Section 11 directs Educational Service Districts to develop and provide a program of outreach to community-based programs and organizations that are serving non-English speaking segments of the population as well as those programs that target groups of students who are struggling academically. This is an idea that should be considered within the context of the several studies, due this December, that will analyze and make recommendations on how to close the achievement gap.

Section 12 directs the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to allocate grant funds to school districts to provide summer school funding for all middle and high school students to explore career opportunities rich in math, science, and technology. School districts and skills centers should be finding ways to engage students in learning and career exploration as part of their basic missions. One exciting opportunity initiated in 2006 is the Washington Aerospace Scholars, a statewide partnership through the Washington Aerospace Scholars Foundation with The Museum of Flight, schools and business partners. The program gives high school students the opportunity to participate in hands-on engineering activities; tour facilities at Boeing, the University of Washington, Microsoft, and Battelle; receive mentoring from astronauts, pilots, engineers, and scientists; and conduct a project on Mars exploration. Future funds need to support targeted programs that have been proven effective.

Section 13 directs the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to contract with a national organization to establish and operate an endowment for the promotion of geography education. There are no funds provided for the creation of the endowment program.

For these reasons, I am vetoing Sections 6, 11, 12 and 13 of Engrossed Second Substitute Senate Bill 6673.

With the exception of Sections 6, 11, 12 and 13, Engrossed Second Substitute Senate Bill 6673 is approved.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/

Christine O. Gregoire
Governor