

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5305

*As Reported By House Committee on:
Education*

Title: An act relating to school suspension.

Brief Description: Conditioning the reduction of a student's suspension on the commencement of counseling.

Sponsor(s): Senate Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Senators Owen and Craswell).

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Education, April 3, 1991, DP.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION**

Majority Report: *Do pass.* Signed by 17 members: Representatives Peery, Chair; G. Fisher, Vice Chair; Brough, Ranking Minority Member; Vance, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Betrozoff; Broback; Cole; Dorn; Holland; P. Johnson; Jones; Neher; Orr; Phillips; Rasmussen; Roland; and Valle.

Staff: Susan Kirkpatrick (786-7291).

Background: Under current law, the State Board of Education is required to adopt and distribute rules and regulations prescribing the substantive and procedural due process guarantees of students in the common schools. Pursuant to that statutory authority, the State Board of Education has adopted rules regarding short-term and long-term suspension of students. Local school boards also adopt codes of conduct for students.

Summary of Bill: A school district may reduce the length of a student's suspension if the student undergoes counseling or other treatment services.

Consistent with current law, a school district is not obligated to pay for counseling or treatment services except those agreed to by the district.

Fiscal Note: Requested March 25, 1991.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: In a recent incident in Kitsap School District, a 14-year-old befriended a little girl on the bus. The 14-year-old subsequently put a note in the little girl's backpack threatening kidnap. The school wanted to discipline the 14-year-old and preferred counseling. However, they were concerned about liability for the counseling so they suspended her instead. The bill is designed to give school districts the opportunity to provide counseling or to go to the parents and require them to obtain counseling for their child as an alternative to suspension. Last year's bill got vetoed because the governor was concerned that the language identifying what did not have to be paid for might create liability in other areas. The language of the current bill has been worked out with the governor's staff.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Senator Owen, prime sponsor; Bob Naon, Kitsap County Prosecutor's Office; and Carl Davies, parent.