

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1276

*As Reported By House Committee on:
Education*

Title: An act relating to school construction standards for fire prevention and safety.

Brief Description: Requiring new schools to have automatic fire equipment.

Sponsor(s): Representatives R. King, Ferguson, Peery, R. Meyers, Orr, Prentice, Edmondson, Schmidt, Brough, Chandler, Fraser, Paris, Winsley, Miller, Mitchell, Jacobsen, Rayburn, Basich and Scott.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Education, February 25, 1991, DPS.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION**

Majority Report: *That Substitute House Bill No. 1276 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.*
Signed by 17 members: Representatives Peery, Chair; G. Fisher, Vice Chair; Brough, Ranking Minority Member; Vance, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Betzoff; Broback; Brumsickle; Cole; Dorn; P. Johnson; Jones; Neher; Orr; Rasmussen; Roland; H. Sommers; and Valle.

Minority Report: *Do not pass.* Signed by 1 member: Representative Holland.

Staff: Robert Butts (786-7111).

Background: The state building code establishes technical standards for building construction. The code consists of four sets of standards covering the following components of construction: building, mechanical, fire, and plumbing. Counties and cities may adopt standards more stringent than the state building code.

Specific standards are established for different types of buildings. Group E-1 occupancies refer to buildings used for educational purposes for children up to the 12th grade by 50 or more persons for more than 12 hours per week or four hours in any one day.

The current state codes require that schools have sprinkler systems only in enclosed spaces below stairways and in basements larger than 1500 square feet. Four counties - King, Kitsap, Thurston and Clark - require sprinklers in all occupancies larger than a specified size (10,000 - 12,000 square feet).

Summary of Substitute Bill: All buildings constructed after July 1, 1992, that will be used for educational purposes through the 12th grade by 50 or more persons for more than 12 hours per week, or four hours in any one day, shall be provided with an automatic fire-extinguishing system. Portable classrooms and other portable school facilities are excluded from the requirement.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Portable classrooms and other portable buildings were excluded from the sprinkler requirement. In addition, the effective date with respect to new buildings was clarified, and language was added to the building code section of the RCWs.

Fiscal Note: Requested February 6, 1991.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect July 1, 1992.

Testimony For: Between 1981 and 1988, damage caused by fire cost school districts \$10 million. In addition, several of these fires caused considerable disruption to the districts' educational programs. If these buildings would have had sprinklers, the damage would have been substantially less, roughly \$500,000, and would have reduced the hazards faced by firefighters.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Otto Jensen, Washington Association of Fire Chiefs (in favor); Paul O'Conner, Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board (in favor); Steve Masini, MSGS Architects (in favor); Norm Wisner, Tumwater Schools (in favor); and Blair Patrick, Washington Association of Building Officials (need to reference another section in the code).