

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6155

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, FEBRUARY 2, 1994

Brief Description: Revising provisions relating to schools.

SPONSORS: Senators McAuliffe, Winsley, Franklin, Prentice and Bauer

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6155 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Pelz, Chairman; McAuliffe, Vice Chairman; Gaspard, Hochstatter, McDonald, Moyer, M. Rasmussen, Rinehart, A. Smith and Winsley.

Staff: Leslie Goldstein (786-7424)

Hearing Dates: January 26, 1994; February 2, 1994

BACKGROUND:

Many teachers, students, administrators, and parents are concerned about the growing level of violence in society and in schools.

SUMMARY:

Dangerous Items. The list of unlawful items on school property is expanded to include any explosive devices.

Chemical devices (e.g., mace, pepper spray) or other sprays used for debilitating purposes may be carried onto school property, school-provided transportation, or facilities while being used exclusively by public or private schools. However, these devices must be used solely for self-defense or the defense of others.

Student Records. The Public Disclosure Act is amended to allow the following individuals access to personal information in files maintained for students in public schools:

1. School officials of the student's school or district who the district or school has determined have legitimate educational interests in the information;
2. Officials of other schools or districts in which the student seeks or requests to enroll, if the student's parents are notified of the transfer, receive a copy of the information if desired, and have an opportunity for a hearing to challenge the content of the record; and
3. State and local officials, probation officers, or other authorities who have a legitimate interest in the

information in order to protect the health, safety or welfare of the student or other persons.

Family Reconciliation Services. Upon a referral by a school or other appropriate agency, family reconciliation services, which are provided by the Department of Social and Health Services, may include training in parenting, conflict management, and dispute resolution skills.

Admission of Students. School districts may delay admission of a transfer student until academic, counseling, conduct, or other relevant records are obtained from the student's previous school district or districts.

Diversion Agreements. When a juvenile is released by the courts under a diversion agreement and placed in a school, the agreement must contain provisions describing required conduct and behavior of the juvenile while under the school's supervision. School officials must be included in the development of the school program portion of the diversion agreement.

Staff Development. The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall award grants for staff development programs for school/community teams to promote safe schools and prevent acts of violence.

Grants shall be made to organizations that are approved in-service training providers by the State Board of Education.

EFFECT OF PROPOSED SUBSTITUTE:

Provisions in the original bill about explosive devices, exemptions from public disclosure laws, diversion agreements, and grant programs are deleted. The statute requiring school districts to send permanent records of transferring students, even if fines were not paid, is changed to permit school districts to withhold permanent records of students if the student has failed to pay a fine.

When a student transfers to another school, the receiving school shall request the student and parent to briefly indicate information about the student's history in former schools.

The receiving school shall request the sending school to send the student's permanent record. If the student has unpaid fines, the sending district shall transmit information about the student including information about the academic performance, special placement, and records of disciplinary action. However, the sending district may withhold the permanent record or official transcript. The student must be informed that failure to have a permanent record may result in failure to graduate or exclusion from extracurricular activities.

When the information is requested by the receiving district, the information must be transmitted by the sending district within five school days.

Family reconciliation services may include information on parenting, conflict management, and dispute resolution.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: requested January 17, 1994

Effective Date: July 1, 1994

TESTIMONY FOR:

The bill was designed to improve school safety, make it easier to share student records, improve partnerships with the juvenile court system, and provide training to promote safe schools and prevent violence.

TESTIMONY AGAINST:

Concerns were expressed regarding the definition of dangerous fireworks; whether or not mace should be permitted on school grounds; and whether or not the exemption to the public records law for the exchange of information was too broad.

TESTIFIED: PRO: Mark Della, Donna Salcedo, Seattle School District; Judy Hartmann, Bob Maier, WEA; Walter Bell, Principals' Assn.; Susan Patrick, OSPI; Marcia Costello, WA Assn. of School Administrators; CON: Janeane Dunbar, Computer Professionals For Social Responsibility; Jerry Sheehan, ACLU; Jerry Farley, WA Independence Day Assn.