

HOUSE BILL ANALYSIS

HB 3069

Title: *An act relating to traffic safety education.*

Brief Description: *Requiring development of a traffic safety education course for parents providing home-based instruction.*

Sponsors: *Representatives Sherstad and Johnson.*

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Meeting Date: *February 3, 1998.*

Bill Analysis Prepared by: *Susan Morrissey (786-7111).*

Background: People under the age of 18 must satisfactorily complete a traffic safety education course before they can apply for licenses to drive. By law, these courses are limited to those taught either through the public schools or through commercial driving instructors. *The courses must meet certain requirements that are prescribed through law and through rules adopted by the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI). The rules describe the credentials instructors must possess, some of the components of the courses, the safety standards that vehicles used to teach students must meet, the state funding for courses taught in the public schools, and course scheduling requirements.*

Home-schooled and private school students may enroll in the public schools on a part-time basis in order to take courses such as traffic safety courses. By law, school districts must offer at least one traffic safety class at times other than regular school hours, if the districts have an approved private high school within their boundaries and sufficient demand exists to fill the class.

Traffic safety courses in the public schools are funded from the Public Safety Education Account. Money in the account is provided through a surcharge placed on moving traffic violations. School districts receive \$137 per student per class. The money from the account often does not cover the entire cost to the district of offering the course, so many districts supplement that amount with a student fee of up to \$200. The Public Safety Account provides districts with an additional \$66.81 for each enrolled student who is eligible for the free and reduced lunch program. If the districts charge fees for the course, they must use the additional dollars to provide eligible low-income students with a scholarship that partially or completely covers the required student fees.

Summary of Bill: The SPI will develop a traffic safety education course that can be used by parents who are home-schooling their children. The course must include at least the following components:

- } The equivalent of 30 hours of instruction;
- } The equivalent of 50 hours of street driving;
- } Four hours of instruction on substance abuse and its effect on driving; and
- } An assessment of a student's driving skills and readiness to apply for a driver's license.

A parent who is planning to use the course must certify to SPI that he or she has a current Washington driver's license, has not been convicted of criminally negligent homicide or driving while intoxicated, and has not been disabled because of mental illness. SPI is not authorized to require the parent to undergo a background investigation to verify the parent's driving record or mental health history. In addition, the agency may not require the parent to participate in instructional classes. A parent who meets the requirements will be considered a qualified teacher of traffic safety education.—

Home-schooled students who have successfully completed the traffic safety course will meet the educational requirements that must be completed before a person under 18 may apply for a driver's license.

Appropriation: *None.*

Fiscal Note: *Requested on January 29, 1998.*

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