

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SSB 5543

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**As Passed House - Amended:**

March 6, 2002

**Title:** An act relating to school safety.

**Brief Description:** Improving student safety.

**Sponsors:** By Senate Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Senators Kastama, McAuliffe, Eide, Regala, Rasmussen, Thibaudeau, Costa, Kohl-Welles and Winsley; by request of Governor Locke and Superintendent of Public Instruction).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Education: 2/20/02, 2/27/02 [DPA].

**Floor Activity:**

Passed House - Amended: 3/6/02, 89-3.

### Brief Summary of Substitute Bill (As Amended by House)

- Requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to provide guidance to schools in developing comprehensive safe school plans.
- Requires the guidance to include a comprehensive school safety checklist and successful model comprehensive safe school plans.
- Model comprehensive safe school plans must include prevention, intervention, all-hazards/crisis response, and post crisis recovery.
- The SPI has the authority to adopt rules to implement provisions of comprehensive safe school plans.
- Exempts from public disclosure information compiled by school districts or schools in the development of comprehensive safe school plans to the extent they identify specific vulnerabilities.
- Provides for an emergency clause for specific portions of the act.

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**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Quall, Chair; Haigh, Vice Chair; Talcott, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Cox, McDermott, Rockefeller, Santos, Schmidt and Upthegrove.

**Minority Report:** Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Schindler.

**Staff:** Ilene Miller (786-7310).

**Background:**

The State Board of Education (SBE), based on the advice of the Washington State Patrol's Director of Fire Protection, is required to adopt rules regarding the evacuation of schools during sudden emergencies. Pursuant to this authority, the SBE has issued rules requiring local school boards and governing bodies of private schools to develop and practice evacuation plans. The rules must be published and distributed, and the evacuation plans are to be taught periodically to all school personnel as well.

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**Summary of Amended Bill:**

By June 1, 2003, the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) must provide guidance to schools on developing comprehensive safe school plans. This guidance must be developed in consultation with representatives from the emergency management division of the state Military Department, educators, classified staff, principals, superintendents, administrators, the American Society for Industrial Security, the state Criminal Justice Training Commission, and the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs. The guidance must include a comprehensive school safety checklist, and successful models of comprehensive safe school plans.

The model comprehensive safe school plans must include elements of: (1) prevention, (2) intervention, (3) all-hazards/crisis response, and (4) postcrisis recovery. The SPI, in consultation with school district superintendents must establish timelines for schools to develop their own comprehensive safe school plans. The SPI also must require schools to periodically report progress on their comprehensive safe school plans. Additionally, schools must consider the guidance provided by the SPI when developing their own plans.

The SPI has the authority to adopt rules that allow for implementation of comprehensive safe school plans. The rules may include provisions for periodic drills, periodic testing, evacuations, and lockdowns. The rules are not limited to these provisions and may include any other components of a comprehensive safe school plan.

Information that is compiled by school districts or schools in the development of their

comprehensive safe school plans are exempt from public disclosure.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date of Amended Bill:** The bill contains several effective dates. Please refer to the bill.

**Testimony For:** Safe schools are an absolute priority. We need safe and civil learning environments in order for students to have the best achievements possible. Schools are currently required to have plans for fires and earthquakes. This means that plans are already most of the way there. Schools need to go the rest of the way to make their plans all-hazards plans. School districts are working hard to develop crisis plans and to deal with issues of school safety.

(With concerns) This bill mandates schools to have safe school plans, and there is no money in the budget for this type of mandate. Budget language only encourages a plan; it does not require it. There are not enough resources to mandate safe school plans.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** (In support) Senator Kastama, prime sponsor.

(In support with concerns) Ahndrea Blue, Governor's Office; Robert Butts, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; Doug Nelson, Public School Employees of Washington; and Joe Pope, Association of Washington School Principals.