

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1818

As Reported by House Committee On:

Education

Title: An act relating to school safety.

Brief Description: Improving student safety.

Sponsors: Representatives Rockefeller, Cox, Quall, Haigh, Simpson, Edwards, Keiser, Conway, Schual-Berke, Kenney, Santos, Darneille and Jackley; by request of Governor Locke; Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/12/01, 2/26/01 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

To the extent funds are appropriated:

- Districts are required to establish policies requiring schools to develop comprehensive safe school plans.
- Schools are required to develop site-based comprehensive plans consisting of specified components.
- The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) is required to establish a school safety hotline, a school safety center advisory committee, and a school safety center.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Talcott, Republican Co-Chair; Anderson, Republican Vice Chair; Haigh, Democratic Vice Chair; Cox, Ericksen, Keiser, McDermott, Pearson, Rockefeller, Santos, D. Schmidt and Schual-Berke.

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

Staff: Sydney Forrester (786-7120).

Background:

During the 1999 and 2000 sessions, the Legislature expanded funding for school safety by creating four new programs: School Safety Planning; School Safety Prevention and Intervention Programs; the Disruptive Students Project; and Safety Allocations.

Funds for school safety planning have supported the development of safety plans, including training, practicing, evaluating, and refining the plans. Sixty-six of the state's 296 districts received grant funding to develop their safety plans for the first two years.

The Legislature provided \$2 million for the 1999-01 biennium for state prevention and intervention programs. These are two-year competitive grants to support proven-effective programs— to improve safety in schools. Grants were awarded to 15 districts.

The Disruptive Student Project provides school-building teams with research-based professional development to assist with problems presented by disruptive students. To date, 127 school-building teams have participated in training.

During the 2000 session, the Legislature provided \$5.6 million to be allocated on an enrollment basis, at a maximum rate of \$10.00 per student, during the 2000-01 school year. These funds may be expended for safety planning and training, equipment, before/during/and after school security, and minor building renovation.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

To the extent funds are appropriated, local school boards must establish policies requiring each school to develop a written comprehensive safe school plan. Schools must develop site-based comprehensive plans to include prevention, intervention, all hazards and crisis response, and post-crisis recovery. Schools are required to include parents, students, staff, and local emergency management agencies in their plan development and implementation.

Districts must establish an approval process for comprehensive plans. Plans must be approved by September 1, 2002. Districts also must develop a process to inform students, parents, staff, and volunteers about the district's school-based plans, and must provide to students and parent annually information on the implementation and evaluation of the district's school-based plans.

Schools must conduct annual evaluations including reviews, drills, or simulated practices, and must maintain documentation of yearly reviews, drills, or simulated practices, and must make the information available upon written request.

A school safety center must be established in the OSPI for the purpose of providing districts with the assistance necessary to create a consistent, comprehensive approach to school safety. The OSPI must appoint a school safety center advisory committee for the purpose of developing a training program for school safety personnel. The OSPI also must contract with an independent vendor to establish a school safety hotline for the reporting of information on any activity threatening school safety.

A per pupil allocation must be distributed to each school district. No district may be allocated less than \$2,000. If specific funding is not provided, the act does not take effect.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill contains provisions requiring a school safety center, a school safety center advisory committee, and a school safety hotline. A per pupil allocation is required, and a minimum per district allocation of \$2,000 is required.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available on original bill.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed. However, the bill is null and void if not funded in the budget.

Testimony For: (Original bill) A comprehensive plan is more than fire alarms and metal detectors. The variety of problems affecting schools is so great that a safety and security plan must have wide focus. The number of hours required for emergency response agencies to address particular problems is significant when the agencies have to reinvent the wheel for each school. This bill creates a template and will make management more efficient and streamlined. The collaborative efforts of many interests support the bill because it helps schools understand what they need to include in their individual plans. This approach gives local districts authority to tailor their plans to their individual needs within a common framework of components. It offers districts the opportunity to update their plans, and to maximize resources. The plans address the schools' needs to be proactive and reactive in addressing on-site issues to reduce the number of crises. The Governor's proposed budget provides \$10 per pupil allocation for developing comprehensive safe school plans. Communities believe schools should be safe and the community needs to be aware of and involved with the school safety plan.

Testimony Against: (Original bill) None.

Testified: (In support) Representative Rockefeller, prime sponsor; Ahndrea Blue, Governor's Office; Tom Kelly, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; Nick Brossoit, Tumwater School District; Larry Farrar, Seattle Schools; Peggy McEvoy,

Seattle Schools; Barbara Mertens, Washington Association of School Administrators; and Linda Lamb, State Board of Education.