
Education Committee

SSB 5543

Brief Description: Improving student safety.

Sponsors: 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).

Hearing Date: 2/20/02

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.

Summary of Bill:

The SBE's rule-making authority concerning evacuation of schools is expanded to include all-hazard- emergencies. When developing these rules, the SBE must consult with the state emergency management department and the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI).

The rules created by the SBE must:

Provide guidance on both the development and implementation of all-hazard emergency management plans; Specify the date by which school districts must have their plans completed; Be published and distributed to school officials, who then must provide information about emergency plans to every staff member in their district; and Include instruction sufficient to allow pupils and staff to leave their building in the shortest time possible, or to take other steps necessary without confusion and panic.

To the extent that funds are appropriated, school districts must require individual schools to develop a comprehensive safe school-based plan that includes the following components: (1) prevention, (2) intervention, (3) all-hazards and crisis response, and (4) post-crisis recovery. School districts must report to the SPI whether schools in its district have developed comprehensive safe school plans. The SPI must annually report to the SBE and the

Legislature regarding school districts' safe school planning activities.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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