

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SSB 5543

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As Passed Senate, January 23, 2002

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

**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; Superintendent of Public Instruction).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Education: 1/29/01, 2/19/01 [DPS].

Passed Senate: 3/13/01, 47-0; 1/23/02, 46-0.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5543 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Eide, Vice Chair; Carlson, Finkbeiner, Hewitt, Johnson, Kastama, Kohl-Welles, Prentice, Rasmussen, Regala and Zarelli.

**Staff:** Kelly Simpson (786-7403)

**Background:** Current law requires the State Board of Education, upon the advice of the Washington State Patrol's Director of Fire Protection, to adopt and distribute rules concerning the evacuation of schools during a "sudden emergency." Pursuant to this authority, the State Board has issued rules requiring local school boards and governing bodies of private schools to develop and practice evacuation plans. These plans are to be taught periodically to all school personnel and practiced as frequently as may be necessary.

**Summary of Bill:** To the extent funds are provided, school districts must require each school within its district to develop a comprehensive safe school plan. The school-based plans must contain the following components to ensure a safe learning environment for students and adults: (1) prevention; (2) intervention; (3) all hazards and crisis response; and (4) postcrisis recovery.

Current State Board of Education (SBE) rule-making authority regarding emergency evacuation plans at public schools is expanded to address "all-hazard" emergencies. The new SBE rules must provide guidance to public schools on the development of "all-hazard emergency management plans," which is one component of the comprehensive safe school plans. The SBE must consult with the emergency management division of the state Military Department and the Superintendent of Public Instruction when developing the rules.

School districts must report to the Superintendent of Public Instruction regarding whether schools have developed comprehensive safe school plans. The Superintendent of Public

Instruction must then annually report to the SBE and the Legislature regarding planning activities.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Testimony For:** Planning for, and responding to, school emergencies ought to be done at all schools in order to ensure safe learning environments for all children. Currently, there is no consistency throughout the state regarding school safety planning. Additionally, in order to properly address the multiple types of emergencies occurring in schools today, more comprehensive planning is needed. Comprehensive prevention and intervention measures, in addition to responding to a particular incident during and after the crisis, would be required at all public schools under this bill.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Senator Kastama, prime sponsor; Ahndrea Blue, Governor's Office; Tom Kelly, OSPI; Barbara Mertens, WASA; Gordon Dolman, Blaine School District; Larry Farrar, Seattle School District; Ray Tolcacher, Prosser School District; Pegi McEvoy, Seattle School District.

**House Amendment(s):** The Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI), in consultation with stakeholders, must provide guidance to school districts in developing comprehensive safe school plans. The guidance must at least include safety checklists and model safety plans. The model plans must include the following components: (1) prevention, (2) intervention, (3) all hazards/crisis response, and postcrisis recovery. Additionally, SPI must establish timelines for districts to develop safety plans and must require districts to periodically report progress regarding the plans.

The State Board of Education's rulemaking authority requiring emergency evacuation plans at public and private schools is removed.

Finally, the House amendment exempts from public disclosure information compiled in the development of safety plans, to the extent it identifies school vulnerabilities.