

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1469

As Reported by House Committee On:
Education

Title: An act relating to record checks for school employees.

Brief Description: Concerning record checks for school employees.

Sponsors: Representatives Quall, Dickerson, Green and Ericks.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/16/07, 2/20/07 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires all school district employees to undergo a record check.
- Eliminates the requirement that the State Patrol charge school districts and educational service districts for only the incremental costs associated with checking fingerprints.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Quall, Chair; Barlow, Vice Chair; Priest, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Haigh, McDermott, Roach, Santos and P. Sullivan.

Staff: Andrew Colvin (786-7304).

Background:

School districts, educational service districts (ESDs), the state school for the deaf, and the state school for the blind must request a criminal record check, including a fingerprint check, before hiring employees. There has apparently been some difference in interpretation as to whether record and fingerprint checks are required for all employees, or only those who have regularly scheduled unsupervised access to children. Record checks, with fingerprint checks, must also be requested for contractors who will have regularly scheduled unsupervised access

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to children. These record checks are provided by the Washington State Patrol and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

There is currently an incremental fee schedule for record checks for classified and non-classified school employees. Under this fee schedule private school employees, contractors, classified employees, and certification applicants are charged one fee, currently \$65, while school districts and ESDs are charged another, currently \$55.

The Joint Task Force on Criminal Background Check Processes (Task Force) was created by the passage of Engrossed Substitute House Bill (ESHB) 2556 during the 2004 legislative session. The purpose of the Task Force was to review and make recommendations regarding how to improve the state's criminal background check processes. The Task Force was extended and expanded through subsequent legislation in 2005 and 2006. In January 2007, the Task Force issued its final report, which included recommendations. These recommendations included requiring record checks for all school employees, and eliminating incremental fees to allow all school employees and contractors to pay the same fee.

Summary of Bill:

Portions of the current statute are reorganized so that it is clear that all school district and educational service district employees must undergo a record and fingerprint check before being hired. Provisions relating to contractors are moved to a separate subsection, and contractors shall continue to undergo record and fingerprint checks only if they will have regularly scheduled unsupervised access to children.

Provisions relating to the state school for the deaf and the state school for the blind are deleted from the common school statutes and placed in the chapter that specifically covers those schools.

The requirement that the State Patrol charge only incremental fees for school district and educational service district employees is eliminated.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This legislation is a good safety measure that closes the loop on people that are working around or near our children in public schools.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Quall, prime sponsor.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.