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## Education Committee

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### SSB 5288

**Brief Description:** Requiring cyberbullying to be included in school district harassment prevention policies.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators Kohl-Welles, Murray, McAuliffe, Weinstein, Shin and Rasmussen).

#### Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Revises the definition of harassment, intimidation, and bullying for school district policies to include electronic acts.
- Requires that school district policies on harassment, intimidation, and bullying include a section addressing electronic acts.
- Requires school districts to make materials regarding cyberbullying available to parents and students.

**Hearing Date:** 3/15/07

**Staff:** Andrew Colvin (786-7304).

#### Background:

Legislation passed in 2002 required each school district to adopt a policy prohibiting harassment, intimidation, or bullying of any student. Harassment, intimidation, or bullying includes a written, verbal, or physical act that harms a student or damages a student's property, interferes with a student's education, creates a threatening educational environment, or disrupts operation of the school. Drawing in part on the definition of "malicious harassment" in Washington's criminal code, such acts include, but are not limited to, those motivated by perception of the victim's race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, or mental, physical, or sensory handicap.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

As required by the legislation, The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) developed a model policy and training materials to assist school districts, and made these available on its website and through other means.

**Summary of Bill:**

The definition of harassment, intimidation, or bullying is expanded to include electronic acts, which include any communication where there is the transmission of information by wire, radio, optical cable, electromagnetic, or other similar means. All school districts are required to amend their policies on harassment, intimidation, and bullying to address electronic acts conducted by a student while on school grounds and during the school day.

School districts must make materials available to parents and students about cyberbullying. The materials must include information on safe internet use and options available to students who are being bullied by electronic means.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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