
Early Learning & Human Services Committee

SSB 5316

Brief Description: Adopting a model policy to require a third person to be present during interviews.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Human Services & Corrections (originally sponsored by Senators Becker and Carrell).

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires the Washington State School Directors' Association to adopt a model policy addressing protocols when a child welfare interview is conducted on school premises.
- Requires the Washington State School Directors' Association to consult with the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs when formulating the model policy.

Hearing Date: 3/21/13

Staff: Lindsay Lanham (786-7120).

Background:

When conducting interviews for a child welfare investigation or the Family Assessment Response (FAR), the Department of Social and Health Services, Children's Administration (CA) or the law enforcement have the statutory authority to interview children alone and without parental consent. Interviews may occur in schools, child care facilities, the child's home or any other suitable location. Prior to conducting interviews the CA investigator, FAR worker, or law enforcement are required to determine whether the child wishes to have a third party present for the interview. If the child does wish for a third party to be present, the CA investigator, FAR worker, or law enforcement are required to make reasonable efforts to accommodate the child's wishes. Additionally, the CA investigator, FAR worker, or law enforcement are mandated to make reasonable efforts to have a third party present during child interviews as long as the

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presence of a third party does not jeopardize the course of the investigation and the child does not object to having a third party present during the interview.

Summary of Bill:

The Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA) is required to adopt a model policy addressing protocols when a child welfare interview is conducted on school premises. Additionally, the WSSDA is required consult with the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs when formulating the model policy.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on March 20, 2013.

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