

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5197

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Early Learning & K-12 Education, February 4, 2013

Title: An act relating to safe school buildings.

Brief Description: Requiring additional safety features in school construction and remodeling.

Sponsors: Senators Dammeier, Rolfes, Litzow, Billig, Mullet, Becker, Hill, Hargrove, Braun, Honeyford, Roach and Hewitt.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/01/13, 2/04/13 [DPS-WM, w/oRec].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5197 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Litzow, Chair; Dammeier, Vice Chair; Billig, Brown, Cleveland, Fain, Hill, McAuliffe, Ranking Member; Rivers and Rolfes, Assistant Ranking Member.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Mullet.

Staff: Katherine Taylor (786-7434)

Background: Currently, every school board of directors, unless otherwise specifically provided by law, must:

- cause all school buildings to be properly heated, lighted, ventilated, and maintained in a clean and sanitary condition; and
- maintain, repair, furnish, and insure school buildings.

Summary of Bill: The bill as referred to committee not considered.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Substitute): Every school district board of directors must require each school to have at least one silent alarm located in its administrative offices. The alarm must alert local police directly that a law enforcement response is necessary at the school.

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.

Every board of directors, unless otherwise specifically provided by law, must:

- require all school buildings, when constructed or remodeled, to contain a mechanism by which the exterior building doors of the school may be electronically locked from the administrative offices of the school; and
- require all school buildings, when constructed or anytime a school construction project qualifies for a major renewal project under the state's school construction assistance program, to be designed or updated in such a way as to restrict the general public from entering the school except through the administrative offices and electronically lock administrative office doors to prohibit access to the rest of the school building.

When appropriations are made for state assistance for school construction, the appropriations must include the sum of \$5 million, or as much thereof as may be necessary, to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction for the purposes of funding the requirement of providing each school with at least one silent alarm.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION COMMITTEE (Recommended Substitute): School districts must implement a panic alarm system by December 1, 2014.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction must create a model policy regarding panic alarm systems by June 1, 2014.

School boards of directors must strongly consider installing a perimeter security control mechanism or system on all school campuses.

School boards of directors must give preference to all school building plans and designs for new school construction and remodeling that promote:

- the highest level of safety and security in the event of a threat during school hours;
- direct control and observation of the public entering school grounds;
- the public entering school grounds through as few entrances as possible, such as through the main entrance of a school's administrative offices; and
- the creation of one or more mantraps by which a potential threat may be isolated from the rest of the school campus.

Specific school designs and construction started before the effective date of this bill are not subject to certain requirements.

Appropriation: Yes.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: We are aggrieved by what happened at Sandy Hook. We have become so insensitive. We have had five more shootings at schools since Sandy Hook. We average one shooting per month at a school. We want to make schools safer. Law enforcement will gladly deal with active shooters. We need school safety officers. We are very excited about and supportive of this bill. We need to protect kids. Banks are better protected than schools. The silent alarm part of the bill would help when moments count. Silent alarms combined with mapping are essential. Changes should be made when schools are remodeled or constructed. We need to provide funding more than one time. We appreciate the intent of this bill.

CON: Puyallup schools are very proactive on these sorts of safety matters. We do not want a school locked down all the time. How do I get 2000 people to safety through the offices designed for basketball games? You could have multiple strong access points not just through the office. Even with a lot of money, we cannot do this. If we change the language of the bill, we may be able to do this. Buildings may only be remodeled every 30 years. Police want more information and dialogue than just a panic button.

OTHER: We need to change the statute dealing with safety drills. We need a minimum of nine drills. Specifically, we need four fire drills, four lock down drills, and a local choice for the last drill. We have the Washington Safety Core in place, but it needs to be tweaked. We should use the infrastructure in place to make our kids safe. We review safety plans. We need more tools. We are worried about implementation of the bill. What triggers when the school has to remodel or add doors? What do we do about campuses with multiple buildings or portables or campuses with hundreds of doors? How do we fund this? Five million dollars is only a starting point for alarms. We need help with identifying design features when constructing new schools and remodeling. There is not enough money to do this. This bill could change construction costs and stop construction from proceeding. Construction and remodeling does not happen very often. The intent is good but there are concerns with design. Not everything or everyone can go through the administration doors. The state school construction formula does not work with this bill. The formula discourages this sort of design construction. We would need a complete redesign. We would need a totally new campus not just modernizing our current campus. This will create further strain on local budgets. We need to think about what kind of panic button to use. We need a button capable of transferring real-time information, which is not very expensive. We need an escape door. We need to think about what issue we are addressing and if they apply to regular school hours or after school hours.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Steve Myers, Educational School District (ESD) 105; Kurt Hilyard, Union Gap School District; Brian Winter, Yakima County Sheriff's Office; Lucinda Young, WA Education Assn., Jay Garthwaite, ESD 112, Construction Services Group; Jerry Bender, Assn. of WA School Principals.

CON: Rudolph Fyles, Puyallup School District 3.

OTHER: Dr. Frank Hewins, Franklin Pierce School District No. 402; Jennifer Priddy, Olympia School District No. 11; Eric Meng, Meng Analysis.