

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1003

As Reported by House Committee On:
Education

Title: An act relating to the development of a model policy on natural disaster school infrastructure recovery by the Washington state school directors' association.

Brief Description: Concerning the development of a model policy on natural disaster school infrastructure recovery.

Sponsors: Representatives Hawkins, Lytton, Magendanz, Bergquist, Hayes, Robinson, Parker, Ortiz-Self, Harris, Reykdal, Johnson, Senn, Muri, Farrell, Klippert, Pollet, Nealey, Manweller, Kretz, Hargrove, Appleton, Gregerson, Condotta, Kilduff and Walkinshaw.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 1/15/15, 1/26/15 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Washington State School Directors' Association to develop a model policy addressing the restoration of the safe learning environment that is disrupted by natural disaster impacts to the school district infrastructure, and distribute the policy to districts by August 31, 2016.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 21 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Ortiz-Self, Vice Chair; Reykdal, Vice Chair; Magendanz, Ranking Minority Member; Muri, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Stambaugh, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Caldier, Fagan, Gregory, Griffey, Hargrove, Hayes, S. Hunt, Kilduff, Klippert, Lytton, McCaslin, Orwall, Pollet and Springer.

Staff: Megan Wargacki (786-7194).

Background:

Natural Disasters.

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.

Washington experiences natural disasters, such as floods, landslides, mudslides, high tides, tornadoes, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, fires, wind storms, snow storms, and rain storms.

Safe School Plans.

School districts are required to adopt comprehensive Safe School Plans that prepare them for on-campus emergencies, security issues, and large scale disasters. The plans, among other things, must:

- include required school safety policies and procedures;
- address emergency mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery; and
- use the training guidance provided by the Washington Emergency Management Division of the state Military Department (EMD) and the School Safety Center.

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction's (OSPI's) School Safety Center developed a School Safety Planning Manual, with chapters on Safe School Plans and responding to emergencies and disasters. In 2008, the OSPI developed a Safe School Plan Compliance Checklist to assist districts with determining the degree to which their plans comply with law; this checklist does not include items related to post-crisis recovery or restoring a safe learning environment after a disaster.

Washington Emergency Management Division.

The EMD's mission is to minimize the impact of emergencies and disasters on the people, property, environment, and economy of Washington, including the impact on schools.

Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) helps citizens and first responders prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards. In 2013 FEMA, with other federal agencies, published Guidelines for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operation Plans and Sample School Emergency Operations Plans.

Washington State School Directors' Association.

The Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA) provides leadership and advocacy for school leaders, professional development and training for school board members, and policy and legal services for school districts.

Summary of Bill:

The WSSDA is directed to develop a model policy addressing restoration of the safe learning environment disrupted by natural disaster impacts to school district infrastructures, and distribute the policy to districts by August 31, 2016, with encouragement to adopt the model policy and review the district's Safe School Plan.

In developing the policy, the WSSDA may consult with stakeholders, including the appropriate resources within the OSPI, the EMD, risk management entities that work with school districts, nonprofit experts in disaster recovery, Educational Service Districts, and school districts affected by natural disasters.

The model policy must:

- take into consideration any guidance on infrastructure recovery developed by the FEMA and the EMD;
- include an infrastructure recovery checklist that a school impacted by a natural disaster can use to restore its essential physical and organizational structures, services, and facilities;
- list the offices or divisions of state agencies that school districts may contact for assistance with infrastructure recovery after a natural disaster; and
- list examples of state and federal emergency funding sources for which school districts impacted by a natural disaster have qualified.

The section expires September 1, 2016.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This summer, multiple lightning strikes resulted in large wild fires. Hundreds of homes were destroyed, over 250,000 acres were burned, and over \$200,000 in damages to the Pateros School District because of the wild fires. The district was overwhelmed in the days after the disaster; no one knew who to contact, or what resources might be available to them. It is important to have a list of resources that school boards could use to recover from future disasters.

The policy and procedures should not be specific to fires, it should apply to flooding, mudslides, and earthquakes. Currently districts do not have policies or procedures dealing with this topic. This bill is value added, not time taken, and not an unfunded mandate. Schools in small communities are the heart and soul of the community. Although a school was prepared to be an evacuation site for the town, the fire breached the firefighters' line, came into the community, and consumed the town. The town lost 20 percent of its property value and many homes. About 10 percent of the students and staff lost their homes. The town moved its evacuation site to a neighboring town. The school district leadership worked with many of the agencies listed in the bill to provide emergency services. Although the school did not burn down, it had no electricity and was filled with smoke. Despite its condition, the school was still the resource center for the community and served three meals per day for 15 days. School leaders worked with the educational agencies to find out what they needed to do to reopen. Although the various agencies shared ideas, there was no comprehensive list or coordinated effort. The school opened its doors for the first semester only five days late even though repairs still were going on. People are not prepared or ready for fires. Schools are the lifeline of their communities. After disasters, people sleep in school gymnasiums and the bus barn is a resource center for food and donations. Schools

have disaster plans for emergency exit, but not plans for recovery to get the school opened and stable. The bill would provide a checklist for recovery. The WSSDA has a small staff and it can be tricky to fit large tasks within existing resources. The WSSDA supports the bill because it will make sure the various agencies work together to get the job done.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Hawkins, prime sponsor; Lois Davies, Pateros School District; Jon Wyss, Long Term Recovery Group; and Deb Merle, Washington State School Directors Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.