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## Education Committee

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### HB 2889

**Brief Description:** Concerning absences from the meetings of a school district board of directors because of a temporary absence resulting from travel for work, duties as an elected or appointed official, or military service.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Short, Kretz and Magendanz.

#### Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires school district boards of directors to use available and sufficient electronic remote access means to allow a member who will be unable to attend a regular meeting because of a temporary absence resulting from travel for work, duties as an elected or appointed official, or military service, to participate in the meeting.
- Specifies that if no arrangements can be made for the board member's remote participation in the meeting, and if the temporarily absent board member is otherwise available to participate in the meeting, the member's absence must be excused and may not be considered for purposes of declaring a board member position vacated.

**Hearing Date:** 2/18/16

**Staff:** Ethan Moreno (786-7386).

#### Background:

Although the state constitution charges the Superintendent of Public Instruction with supervision over all matters pertaining to public schools, the local governance and administration of Washington's 295 school districts, the entities charged with providing an education to all school-aged children residing within their boundaries, occurs through elected boards of school district directors.

Regular meetings of a school district board of directors must be held at least monthly. Special meetings may be held periodically as circumstances may demand. Except for executive sessions, all meetings of school district boards of directors are open to the public.

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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.*

A majority of the members of a school district board of directors constitutes a quorum. The absence of any member from four consecutive regular meetings, unless because of sickness or as authorized by resolution of the board, is sufficient cause for the remaining members to declare the position vacant. With limited exceptions, vacant positions are filled by a majority vote of the board of directors. An appointee filling a vacant position must meet statutory requirements for serving on the board, and he or she will serve in the position until a successor to fill the remainder of the unexpired term is elected at the next regular school district election.

**Summary of Bill:**

If a member of a school district board of directors will be unable to attend a regular meeting because of a temporary absence resulting from travel for work, duties as an elected or appointed official, or military service, the member and the board must use available and sufficient electronic remote access means for allowing the member to participate in the meeting. "Remote access means" include, but are not limited to, conference calls and Internet-based communication technologies that include audio or audio and video connections.

If no arrangements can be made for the board member's participation in the meeting through remote access means, and if the temporarily absent board member is otherwise available to participate in the meeting, the board member's absence must be excused and may not be considered for purposes of declaring a board member position vacated.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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