

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6410

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As of February 7, 2018

**Title:** An act relating to school safety.

**Brief Description:** Concerning school safety.

**Sponsors:** Senator Padden.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/29/18, 2/01/18 [DPS-WM].  
Ways & Means: 2/05/18.

**Brief Summary of First Substitute Bill**

- Requires first responder agencies to notify all schools in the vicinity, including private schools, if there is a situation for which an evacuation or lockdown appears reasonably necessary.
- Directs two educational service districts (ESDs) to establish regional school safety centers as part of a statewide network.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6410 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Wellman, Chair; Rolfes, Vice Chair; Zeiger, Ranking Member; Billig, Hawkins, Hunt, Mullet, Padden, Pedersen and Rivers.

**Staff:** Ailey Kato (786-7434)

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

**Staff:** Jeffrey Naas (786-7708)

**Background:** Safe School Plans. Current law requires school districts to adopt and implement safe school plans. The plans must contain specified information. To the extent funds are available, school districts must annually review and update safe school plans. Safe school plans must be consistent with the school mapping information system.

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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.*

State School Safety Center. The Washington Legislature first established a state School Safety Center within the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) in the 2001-02 budget. The School Safety Center's requirements include disseminating successful models of school safety plans, providing assistance to schools to establish a comprehensive safe school plan, coordinating activities relating to school safety, and maintaining a school safety information website.

Regional School Safety and Security Programs. In 2016, the Legislature enacted ESB 6620, which allowed ESDs to implement a regional school safety and security program subject to appropriations.

**Summary of Bill (First Substitute):** First Responder Notifications. Whenever a first responder agency notifies a school of a situation which may necessitate an evacuation or lockdown, the agency must also determine if other schools in the vicinity are similarly threatened and must notify every other school in the vicinity for which an evacuation or lockdown appears reasonably necessary. For purposes of this requirement, "school" includes a private school.

Regional School Safety Centers. Subject to appropriations, two ESDs must establish regional school safety centers as part of a statewide network. One of the regional school safety centers must be located east of the crest of the Cascade Mountains and one located to the west.

The purpose of this statewide network is to provide regional coordination of school safety efforts and resources related to behavioral health threat assessment and suicide prevention.

Regional school safety centers must consult with the state school safety center in order to unify discussions around safety across the state.

ESDs must employ a behavioral health threat assessment coordinator for the regional school safety centers.

Private schools may contract with regional school safety centers for school safety resources and services.

The statute allowing ESDs to implement a regional school safety and security program is repealed. The regional school safety center provisions are subject to a null and void clause.

**EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION COMMITTEE (First Substitute):**

- Removes provisions addressing school mapping.
- Specifies that two ESDs, selected by OSPI in coordination with the nine ESDs, must establish regional school safety centers with one center located east of the crest of the Cascade Mountains and one center located west of the crest.
- Adds that regional school safety center efforts and resources relate to behavioral health threat assessment and suicide prevention.

- Removes specified purposes, required duties, and permissive tasks of the regional school safety centers.
- Specifies that the two ESDs employ a behavioral health threat assessment coordinator but not a mental health coordinator or leadership position.
- Allows private schools to contract with regional school safety centers for school safety resources and services.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested for substitute bill on February 2, 2018.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Proposed Substitute (Early Learning & K-12 Education):** *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* PRO: Many times schools have to call law enforcement for information about emergencies when it should be the other way around. This bill will help improve school safety in all schools, public and private, and it takes a proactive approach by requiring law enforcement to notify schools in certain situations. Private schools serve many students in the state, and they cannot rely on sporadic notification. ESDs have been strong collaborators with private schools in their regions by sharing expertise and professional development opportunities. The capital budget no longer includes funding for school mapping, and many new and renovated schools have not been mapped. School staff need to be trained on how the mapping system works. Regional school safety centers can monitor 911 calls and notify public and private schools and early learning centers when there are incidents in the vicinity.

OTHER: It is best practice for law enforcement to notify schools. Sometimes law enforcement fails to notify schools because of the chaotic nature of some emergencies. Law enforcement would like some liability protection. There are some challenges with using state funds to map private schools. This bill should address school safety drills including lahar and earthquake drills. School mapping is a wonderful program, but it is expensive and has not been funded. School requirements for mapping are not clear. The regional school safety centers should work with the state school safety center.

**Persons Testifying (Early Learning & K-12 Education):** PRO: Senator Mike Padden, Prime Sponsor; Joe Sprague, Executive Director, Washington State Catholic Conference; Sara Betnel, Washington State PTA; Geneva Betnel, citizen; Charlie Brown, Venuetize; Suzie Hanson, Washington Federation of Independent Schools; Kevin Chase, Educational Service District 105.

OTHER: James McMahan, Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs; Mike Donlin, School Safety Center, OSPI.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Early Learning & K-12 Education):** No one.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Ways & Means):** PRO: We strongly support this bill. Our primary focus in this bill is with the requirement that first responders notify all schools, public or private, of an emergency happening in the vicinity of a school that may require lock down or evacuation. Many we have spoken with have been surprised this requirement is not already in place. We suggest that additional funding be added to the capital budget so that the mapping of schools can be added to the bill. This bill mitigates risks to students. It's important to recognize costs, but the bottom line is the safety of our students. This is a small step forward in school safety. The behavioral health threat assessment coordinator will be a big help in responding to emergency situations. We request the two regional school safety centers be expanded to four to cover all of the state. The concept of regional safety centers will make a difference. There were two kids killed in Washington schools last year. We request immediate funding for at least two educational service districts to establish regional school safety centers.

OTHER: We request an amendment to limit liability to first responder agencies.

**Persons Testifying (Ways & Means):** PRO: Kristin Dixon, Superintendent, Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese of Seattle; Charlie Brown, Venuetize; Paul Bootsma, Lynden Christian Schools; Greg Lynch, Olympic Educational Service District; Alex Hur, Clear Risk Solutions; Melissa Gombosky, Association of Educational Service Districts.

OTHER: James McMahan, Washington Association of Sheriffs & Police Chiefs.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Ways & Means):** No one.