

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1507

As Reported by House Committee On: Capital Budget

Title: An act relating to promoting physical safety and security of school buildings, grounds, and surroundings through environmental design principles.

Brief Description: Promoting physical safety and security of school buildings, grounds, and surroundings through environmental design principles.

Sponsors: Representatives Walsh and Kraft.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Capital Budget: 2/5/19, 2/26/19 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Directs school district boards of directors to consider school building plans and designs that promote effective physical safety and security through natural surveillances, natural access controls, and territorial reinforcements, or other safety-focused environmental design elements.
- Repeals a duplicative statute.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CAPITAL BUDGET

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 23 members: Representatives Tharinger, Chair; Doglio, Vice Chair; Peterson, Vice Chair; DeBolt, Ranking Minority Member; Smith, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Steele, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Callan, Corry, Davis, Dye, Eslick, Gildon, Irwin, Jenkin, Leavitt, Lekanoff, Maycumber, Morgan, Riccelli, Santos, Sells, Stonier and Walsh.

Staff: Christine Thomas (786-7142).

Background:

School Building Safety Design and Assessments.

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.

School district boards of directors are required to consider installing perimeter security control mechanisms or systems on all school campuses. They are also required in planning for new school construction projects or major renovations of schools to consider school building plans and designs that promote: optimal levels of security using evolving technology and best practices; direct control and observation of the public entering school grounds; and channeling pedestrian traffic entering school grounds through as few entrances as possible.

The National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities (NCEF) provides assessment guides in their report titled "Mitigating Hazards in School Facilities" that help school facilities planners to assess the safety and security of school buildings, grounds, and surroundings, make hazard mitigation plans, and implement the plans. The NCEF assessment guides embody the three principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED). The three principles are: (1) the ability to easily see what is occurring in a particular setting through natural surveillance; (2) the ability to demonstrate ownership of and respect for property through territorial markings and maintenance; and (3) the ability to restrict who enters or exits an environment through natural access controls.

Studies and Surveys.

The state requires that school districts seeking state funding assistance grants to construct, remodel, or replace school buildings through the School Construction Assistance Program (SCAP) must complete a study and survey (S&S) of its school facilities. The Superintendent of Public Instruction writes rules relating to the information required through the S&S. School districts must prepare the necessary components to complete the S&S document that includes such activities as developing an educational plan; projecting enrollments for student housing needs; evaluating existing school district facilities for space and condition; evaluating the financial capabilities of the district to complete school construction projects; and estimating potential state funding assistance for school construction. The S&S of a school district must be conducted within six years of receiving a SCAP grant award.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

After July 1, 2020, school district boards of directors, in planning for new school construction projects or major remodeling projects, must consider school building plans and designs that promote effective physical safety and security through natural surveillances, natural access controls, and territorial reinforcements. They may also consider other safety-focused environmental design elements while maintaining the functional and aesthetic qualities of school buildings, grounds, and surroundings.

A duplicative statute relating to the S&S is repealed.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill deletes a requirement that, through the S&S process, school districts must assess the safety and security of school buildings, grounds, and surroundings using CPTED principles.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The CPTED principles make school buildings more secure without turning them into prisons. Clear lines of sight, strategic landscaping, channeling pedestrian traffic, and other natural elements of the school site are principles of the CPTED that improve safety and security of schools. Control of ingress and egress are also critical elements of the CPTED. The CPTED design principles prioritize safety and security, but are not meant to be blueprints for school design. The bill balances design elements through both an aesthetics lens and a safety lens, though a comprehensive approach to identifying all risks at schools is more ideal. Conducting the safety assessment would require additional funding. The S&S process is already underfunded; providing additional funding would ensure that a safety assessment would also be completed while providing additional funds for the S&S process.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Walsh, prime sponsor; Tyler Muench, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction; and Brian Sims, Washington State School Directors' Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.