

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5514

As of February 5, 2019

Title: An act relating to first responder agency notifications to schools regarding potential threats.

Brief Description: Concerning first responder agency notifications to schools regarding potential threats.

Sponsors: Senators Padden, Wellman, Zeiger and Frockt.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/30/19.

Brief Summary of 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.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Ailey Kato (786-7434)

Background: Current law requires school districts to adopt and implement safe school plans. To the extent funds are available, school districts must annually review and update safe school plans.

School districts are encouraged to work with local emergency management agencies and other emergency responders to conduct one tabletop exercise, one functional exercise, and two full-scale exercises within a four-year period.

The 2018 supplemental budget included \$722,000 for fiscal year 2019 to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to provide grants to educational service districts (ESDs) and school districts to develop or expand regional safety programs to address student safety. At a minimum, programs must:

- implement a multi-tier threat assessment system;

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- develop a process for notifying schools, including private schools, of safety emergencies; and
- make recommendations or implement appropriate safety technology consistent with regional need.

ESD 105 (Yakima) and ESD 114 (Bremerton) are the lead ESDs and received the bulk of this funding; however, each ESD received some funding.

Summary of Bill: 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.

A first responder agency and its officers, agents, and employees are not liable for any act, or failure to act, regarding this requirement unless they acted with willful disregard.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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: PRO: Some private and public schools are not being notified when there is an emergency. Schools may have to find out about an emergency through a blog or parent. School administrators should also notify school staff when there is an emergency. Safety drills need to include reunification with families. School principals need to have a back-up incident commander in case something happens to the principal. There is technology that can help facilitate notification.

OTHER: Law enforcement officers' first priority is to stop the threat. Notification should happen when feasible. Sometimes law enforcement are not aware of where schools are located. A first responder agency incident commander should be the person that determines when an evacuation or lockdown appears reasonably necessary.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Mike Padden, Prime Sponsor; Lucinda Young, Washington Education Association; Kristin Dixon, Superintendent of Catholic Schools, Archdiocese of Seattle; Mona Johnson, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction; Suzie Hanson, Washington Federation of Independent Schools.

OTHER: James McMahan, Washington Association Sheriffs and Police Chiefs.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.