

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 1941

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to prohibiting active shooter scenarios for school safety-related drills.

Brief Description: Prohibiting active shooter scenarios for school safety-related drills.

Sponsors: House Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Representative Walen).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 1/27/22, 2/1/22 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/9/22, 69-27.

Passed Senate: 3/2/22, 30-18.

Passed Legislature.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Prohibits schools from conducting lockdown drills that include live simulations of or reenactments of active shooter scenarios that are not trauma-informed and age and developmentally appropriate.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Dolan, Vice Chair; Ybarra, Ranking Minority Member; Walsh, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Berg, Bergquist, Callan, McCaslin, McEntire, Ortiz-Self, Rude, Steele and Stonier.

Staff: Emily Stephens (786-7296) and Megan Wargacki (786-7194).

Background:

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Schools must conduct at least one safety-related drill per month and must teach students basic functional drill responses for shelter-in-place, lockdown, and evacuation, which are defined as follows:

- "Shelter-in-place" is used to limit the exposure of students and staff to hazardous materials, such as chemical, biological, or radiological contaminants, released into the environment by isolating the inside environment from the outside.
- "Lockdown" is used to isolate students and staff from threats of violence, such as suspicious trespassers or armed intruders, that may occur in a school or in the vicinity of a school.
- "Evacuation" is used to move students and staff away from threats, such as fires, oil train spills, lahars, or tsunamis.

The drills should also incorporate an earthquake drill. Schools in mapped lahars or tsunami hazard zones must include a pedestrian evacuation drill.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Schools are prohibited from conducting lockdown drills that include live simulations of or reenactments of active shooter scenarios that are not trauma-informed and age and developmentally appropriate.

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) Active shooter drills increase depression, anxiety, and fear of death for children and parents, and can cause unnecessary stress and trauma to students and staff. Active shooter drills do not prevent school shootings or protect school communities if a shooting occurs. There is no empirical research supporting the benefits of school-based armed assailant drills with a sensorial experience, but typical lockdown drills without a sensorial experience do have benefits. The bill should include requirements about notifying families prior to drills and specifying developmentally appropriate and trauma-informed content within the drills.

(Opposed) Dangerous intruders are the threat most likely to cause real harm to students. Active shooter situations can be over before law enforcement responds, particularly in rural areas. Staff and students need to know how to respond in those situations. Active shooter drills can use age-appropriate content and can be carried out by staff that students trust.

(Other) Students and staff feel safer when they have information about what to do in emergency situations, including lockdowns, and when they have practiced some scenarios. Students should not be traumatized by active shooter drills. Conversations around comprehensive school safety planning should continue. The bill should clarify that active shooter drills must avoid simulations and should include prior notice to families, students, and staff, and that content should be trauma-informed and age and developmentally appropriate.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Amy Walen, prime sponsor; and Kathryn Salveson, Washington State Association of School Psychologists.

(Opposed) Michael Olsen, Kettle Falls School District.

(Other) Roz Thompson, Association of Washington School Principals.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: Anna Hernandez-French, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; April Schentrup; Lily Williamson; Jennifer Dolan Waldman; Leanne Kennedy; and Barbie Young, National Alliance on Mental Illness-Eastside.