

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5514

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
Early Learning & K-12 Education, February 6, 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, 2/06/19 [DPS].

**Brief Summary of First Substitute Bill**

- Requires first responder agencies to notify all known schools in the vicinity, including private schools, if there is a situation for which an evacuation or lockdown appears reasonably necessary except in certain circumstances.

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

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5514 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Wellman, Chair; Wilson, C., Vice Chair; Hawkins, Ranking Member; Holy, Hunt, McCoy, Mullet, Padden, Pedersen, Salomon and Wagoner.

**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.

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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.*

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;
- 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 (First Substitute):** Whenever a first responder agency notifies a school of a situation that may necessitate an evacuation or lockdown, the agency must determine if other schools in the vicinity, including private schools, are similarly threatened. The first responder agency must notify every other known school in the vicinity for which an evacuation or lockdown appears reasonably necessary to the agency's incident commander unless the agency is unable to notify schools due to duties directly tied to responding to the incident occurring.

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.

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

- Specifies that a first responder agency must notify other known schools in the vicinity.
- Provides that the agency's incident commander will determine if an evacuation or lockdown appears reasonably necessary triggering the notification requirement.
- Adds that notification is required unless the agency is unable to notify schools due to duties directly tied to responding to the incident occurring.

**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 on Original Bill:** *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* 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.