

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## EHB 2613

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Education, February 23, 1996

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

**Brief Description:** Enhancing school disciplinary measures.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Sterk, Crouse, Carrell, Brumsickle, McMahan, Boldt, Honeyford, D. Sommers, Clements, Sherstad, Koster, Fuhrman, Sheahan, Huff, Mulliken and Thompson.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Education: 2/20/96, 2/22/96, 2/23/96 [DPA].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Goings, Vice Chair; Finkbeiner, Hochstatter, Johnson, Pelz and Rasmussen.

**Staff:** Susan Mielke (786-7422)

**Background:** Dress and Grooming Codes. Currently, school districts may establish schools or programs that have student dress and grooming codes. Parents choose whether their children attend such schools or programs. The codes may require students to wear uniforms. If uniforms are required, districts must accommodate students so the uniform requirement is not an unfair barrier to school attendance and participation.

School Closings. If a school district provides a conclusive demonstration that an unforeseen natural event prevents the district from operating a school for the required 180-day school year, then the district may receive its full allocation of state basic education moneys for up to two days per incident and up to three school days per school year.

Acceptance of Nonresident Students. A student may apply for admission to a public school in a school district where the student is not a resident. Each school district must have standards for accepting and rejecting such applications. A school district may deny a non-resident student's application if acceptance would impose a financial hardship on the district.

Grading Policies. Under the State Board of Education rules, school districts may not reduce grades or deny credit to students in kindergarten through grade four based on the suspension of the student. School districts may not suspend students in grades five and above if the suspension causes the student to lose more than one semester/trimester of academic grades or credit in a school year.

Student Suspension and Expulsion. If a long-term student suspension, which exceeds five consecutive school days, or a student expulsion is appealed, then the suspension or expulsion must not be imposed until the appeal is decided. Emergency expulsions may continue after a prehearing if the student is found to be an immediate and continuing danger, or a continuing threat of substantial disruption to the educational process.

If a short-term student suspension, which is fewer than five consecutive school days, is appealed, then the school principal has the discretion to continue or postpone the suspension until an informal conference is held.

**Summary of Amended Bill:** Acceptance of Nonresident Students. A school district's policy for accepting or rejecting a nonresident student's application for admission to the public schools of the district may include rejection if the student's disciplinary record shows a history of behavior disruptive to the educational process.

Student Suspension and Expulsion. When a student suspension or expulsion is appealed, the district may temporarily suspend or expel a student after an initial hearing for ten days or until an appeal is decided. Any days that a student is temporarily suspended or expelled before the appeal is decided does not limit or extend the suspension or expulsion.

A short-term suspension is defined as a suspension of up to ten school days.

If a student interferes by force or violence with an administrator, teacher, other staff, or another student, the student may be immediately suspended or expelled.

**Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill:** The striking amendment makes the following changes. Specific statutory authority permitting school districts to establish district-wide dress and grooming codes is deleted.

Language permitting a school district to receive its full allocation of state basic education moneys when a school closes due to an unforeseen natural event is deleted.

Language permitting a school district to deny a nonresident student's application for admission to the public schools if the student's disciplinary records shows a history of behavior disruptive to the educational process is retained, but this must be included in a school district's policy establishing acceptance and rejection standards of nonresident applications.

Language limiting the State Board of Education's ability to limit a school district from lowering a student's grade or denying credit for disciplinary reasons is deleted.

Language permitting a school district to suspend a student after an initial hearing when a student suspension or expulsion is appealed is amended. When a student suspension or expulsion is appealed, the district may temporarily suspend or expel a student for 10 days or until an appeal is decided. Any days that a student is temporarily suspended or expelled before the appeal is decided shall not limit or extend the suspension or expulsion.

Language from the original bill is reinserted. If a student interferes by force or violence with an administrator, teacher, other staff, or another student the student may be immediately suspended or expelled.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Testimony For:** The bill was developed by a committee of local school and business people because they perceived a lack of discipline in our public schools. Gang activity in public schools is a real problem. This bill helps to create the appropriate tools to keep dangerous students out of our schools.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Representative Sterk, prime sponsor (pro); Walter Ball, AWSP (pro); Dwayne Slate, WSSDA (pro); Judy Hartmann, WEA (pro); Lorraine Wilson, WSSDA; Jean Ameluxen, OSPI (pro); Donna Salcedo, Seattle Schools.