

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2147

As Reported by House Committee On:
Education

Title: An act relating to preschool and elementary school students assisting in school kitchens.

Brief Description: Protecting preschool and elementary school students assisting in school kitchens.

Sponsors: Representatives McDermott, Upthegrove, Cox, Quall and Rockefeller.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 3/3/03, 3/5/03 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to adopt a policy protecting preschool through fifth grade students who help or work in school kitchens, and describes the required components of the policy.
- Requires the OSPI, by January 1, 2004, to verify and report to the Legislature that school districts have implemented the policy.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Quall, Chair; McDermott, Vice Chair; Haigh, Hunter, Rockefeller and Santos.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 5 members: Representatives Talcott, Ranking Minority Member; Tom, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Cox and McMahan.

Staff: Susan Morrissey (786-7111).

Background:

Under current law, school districts may establish, equip, and operate lunchrooms in

school buildings for students, volunteers, school employees, public agencies, political subdivisions, associations that serve the public, nutrition programs, and for school and employee functions. The lunchrooms are staffed with classified personnel. At times, students are allowed to help in school kitchens.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Before a child in preschool through grade five is allowed to work or help in a school kitchen, the appropriate food service management must have a signed permission slip from the child's parent or guardian. The slip must include the duties and responsibilities of the child and the risks the child might face.

By January 12, 2004, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) will adopt a model policy protecting preschool through sixth grade children who help in elementary school kitchens. The model policy will include a permission slip, limit exposure to hazardous equipment, include age-appropriate safety guidelines for physical kitchen activities and age-appropriate training. It will also require that any injury that occurs to a preschool through sixth grade child working in a school kitchen be reported to the OSPI if the injury requires medical attention. The policy will ensure that any exposure to hazardous equipment is at least as stringent as standards for minors required by state and federal law. The safety guidelines must be consistent with state and federal safety guidelines and standards for kitchen activities.

During the process of creating the policy, the OSPI will consult the Washington State School Directors, parents, principals, representatives of food service employee groups and other interested parties.

By August 1, 2004, each school district will adopt, or amend if necessary, a policy for protecting preschool through sixth grade students who assist in elementary school kitchens. The policy must include the elements in the OSPI model policy.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill clarifies the type of policy the OSPI will adopt and directs school districts to adopt, or amend if necessary, a policy that includes the elements in the OSPI model policy. In addition the substitute bill, refines the elements in the policy, includes dates for policy adoption, and removes a requirement that the OSPI verify that all districts are implementing the policy by January 1, 2004.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

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

Testimony For: Elementary school children are sometimes rewarded for good behavior with a chance to help in school kitchens. Parents aren't always asked whether they want their children to assist in the kitchens and children aren't given any training or formal guidance on their kitchen duties. School kitchen equipment is designed for adults; it may well prove hazardous for youngsters. In fact, the opportunities for injury are daunting. Children can slip on wet floors, sustain burns from dishwashers and hot food and become injured in other ways. Parents need to know what their children will be asked to do and what types of hazards they might face. Although some districts have policies that protect children in school kitchens, many districts have not addressed the issue. Every district should make sure that any child assisting in a school kitchen will receive the protection that the child deserves. The policies may help protect districts from liability if children are injured.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative McDermott, prime sponsor; Wendy Rader-Konofalski, Washington Federation of Teachers; Patti Richardson, Washington Federation of Teachers, United Classified Workers Union; and Carol Taylor Cann, Washington State Parent Teachers Association.