
Education Committee

HB 2543

Brief Description: Establishing regional school safety centers in educational service districts.

Sponsors: Representatives Lovick, Irwin, Springer, Kirby, Doglio, Frame, Chandler, Stokesbary, Griffey, Volz, Ortiz-Self, McBride, Senn, Gregerson, Muri and Pollet.

<p style="text-align: center;">Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Requires educational service districts to establish a regional school safety center as part of a statewide network, subject to funding by the legislature.
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Hearing Date: 1/16/18

Staff: Katie Choate (786-7296) and Megan Wargacki (786-7194).

Background:

Safe school plans.

The legislature requires public schools to have plans and procedures in place in the event of an emergency resulting from natural or man-made disasters. These plans and procedures are known as "safe school plans". Safe school plans include procedures for disaster prevention, intervention, all hazard/crisis response, and post-crisis recovery. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) provides guidance to school districts to develop their own safe school plan unique to their geographic location. School districts are encouraged to work with local emergency management agencies and other emergency responders, and apply for federal emergency response and crisis management grants.

Regional school safety and security programs.

In 2016, legislation was enacted allowing educational service districts (ESDs) to implement a regional school safety and security program. The program should include:

- the establishment of a network of ESD school safety coordinators;
- the creation of technology-based systems that enable communication between schools and response entities;

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- ongoing training of school personnel and emergency responders to establish a system for preventative identification, intervention strategies, and management of risk behaviors; and
- collaboration with other ESDs, the OSPI, and the school safety advisory committee.

The program, which is subject to funding by the Legislature, has not received funding.

Summary of Bill:

The current statutory program (regional school safety and security programs) is being replaced by a similar program (regional school safety centers). Each ESD must establish a regional school safety center (RSSC) as part of a statewide network (network), subject to funding by the legislature. The network must provide regional coordination of school safety efforts, and school safety resources to school districts in the region. Each ESD must employ a mental health coordinator, a threat assessment coordinator, and a leadership position for each RSSC. The RSSCs must provide mental health support, threat assessment training, prevention planning, mitigation, preparedness, crisis response, and community recovery concerning emergency incidents in school. The RSSCs must support safe school plans and assist with coordinating ESD staff trainings related to school safety.

Based on the needs of the school districts in their region, the RSSCs must: (1) provide support to meet state safety standards; (2) seek safety and security funding; (3) support the training of teachers and staff on how to respond during the period before first responders arrive to an emergency; (5) support the development of crisis teams and community recovery support; and (6) provide real time support for school districts in crisis by offering information, best practices, and additional personnel.

Based on the needs of the school districts in their region, the RSSCs may provide early warnings of dangerous situations in close proximity, and implement a technology-based system to improve communication between schools and emergency responders.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 12, 2018.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed. However, the bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.