S-0086.1

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**SENATE BILL 5029**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**State of Washington 68th Legislature 2023 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Short, Holy, Schoesler, Warnick, J. Wilson, and L. Wilson

AN ACT Relating to empowering school district boards of directors; amending RCW 28A.150.290 and 28A.300.040; and creating a new section.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  Each year, school boards across Washington are confronted with expanded state mandates that remove their authority to act in the best interest of their students and communities. Instead of allowing grassroots involvement to shape and enrich student educational experiences, the state has empowered the superintendent of public instruction to enforce strict regulatory compliance without consideration of local beliefs and values. As a result, school boards are forced to take actions they know are at odds with the needs of the people they serve. To halt this erosion of local control and return power to communities, the legislature intends to clarify that the primary duty of the superintendent of public instruction is one of support, not supervision, and that school boards are vested with the final responsibility to set policies that serve their students.

**Sec.**  RCW 28A.150.290 and 1992 c 141 s 504 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The primary duty of the superintendent of public instruction is to empower and give flexibility to each school district board of directors to implement state policies to address the unique needs of their local communities. To fulfill this duty, the superintendent of public instruction shall ((~~have the power and duty to~~)) make such rules and regulations as are necessary for the proper administration of this chapter and RCW 28A.160.150 through ((~~28A.160.220~~)) 28A.160.210, 28A.300.035, 28A.300.170, and 28A.500.010 not inconsistent with the provisions thereof, and in addition to require such reports as may be necessary to carry out his or her duties under this chapter and RCW 28A.160.150 through ((~~28A.160.220~~)) 28A.160.210, 28A.300.035, 28A.300.170, and 28A.500.010.

(2) The superintendent of public instruction shall have the authority to make rules and regulations which establish the terms and conditions for allowing school districts to receive state basic education moneys as provided in RCW 28A.150.250 when said districts are unable to fulfill for one or more schools as officially scheduled the requirement of a full school year of one hundred eighty days or the annual average total instructional hour offering imposed by RCW 28A.150.220 and 28A.150.260 due to one or more of the following conditions:

(a) An unforeseen natural event, including, but not necessarily limited to, a fire, flood, explosion, storm, earthquake, epidemic, or volcanic eruption that has the direct or indirect effect of rendering one or more school district facilities unsafe, unhealthy, inaccessible, or inoperable; and

(b) An unforeseen mechanical failure or an unforeseen action or inaction by one or more persons, including negligence and threats, that (i) is beyond the control of both a school district board of directors and its employees and (ii) has the direct or indirect effect of rendering one or more school district facilities unsafe, unhealthy, inaccessible, or inoperable. Such actions, inactions or mechanical failures may include, but are not necessarily limited to, arson, vandalism, riots, insurrections, bomb threats, bombings, delays in the scheduled completion of construction projects, and the discontinuance or disruption of utilities such as heating, lighting and water: PROVIDED, That an unforeseen action or inaction shall not include any labor dispute between a school district board of directors and any employee of the school district.

A condition is foreseeable for the purposes of this subsection to the extent a reasonably prudent person would have anticipated prior to August first of the preceding school year that the condition probably would occur during the ensuing school year because of the occurrence of an event or a circumstance which existed during such preceding school year or a prior school year. A board of directors of a school district is deemed for the purposes of this subsection to have knowledge of events and circumstances which are a matter of common knowledge within the school district and of those events and circumstances which can be discovered upon prudent inquiry or inspection.

(3) The superintendent of public instruction shall make every effort to reduce the amount of paperwork required in administration of this chapter and RCW 28A.160.150 through ((~~28A.160.220~~)) 28A.160.210, 28A.300.035, 28A.300.170, and 28A.500.010; to simplify the application, monitoring and evaluation processes used; to eliminate all duplicative requests for information from local school districts; and to make every effort to integrate and standardize information requests for other state education acts and federal aid to education acts administered by the superintendent of public instruction so as to reduce paperwork requirements and duplicative information requests.

**Sec.**  RCW 28A.300.040 and 2011 1st sp.s. c 43 s 302 are each amended to read as follows:

In addition to any other powers and duties as provided by law, the powers and duties of the superintendent of public instruction shall be:

(1) To ((~~have supervision over~~)) empower and give flexibility to each school district board of directors to implement state policies to address the unique needs of their local communities and administer all matters pertaining to the public schools of the state;

(2) To report to the governor and the legislature such information and data as may be required for the management and improvement of the schools;

(3) To prepare and have printed such forms, registers, courses of study, rules for the government of the common schools, and such other material and books as may be necessary for the discharge of the duties of teachers and officials charged with the administration of the laws relating to the common schools, and to distribute the same to educational service district superintendents;

(4) To travel, without neglecting his or her other official duties as superintendent of public instruction, for the purpose of attending educational meetings or conventions, of visiting schools, and of consulting educational service district superintendents or other school officials;

(5) To prepare and from time to time to revise a manual of the Washington state common school code, copies of which shall be made available online and which shall be sold at approximate actual cost of publication and distribution per volume to public and nonpublic agencies or individuals, said manual to contain Titles 28A and 28C RCW, rules related to the common schools, and such other matter as the state superintendent or the state board of education shall determine;

(6) To file all papers, reports and public documents transmitted to the superintendent by the school officials of the several counties or districts of the state, each year separately. Copies of all papers filed in the superintendent's office, and the superintendent's official acts, may, or upon request, shall be certified by the superintendent and attested by the superintendent's official seal, and when so certified shall be evidence of the papers or acts so certified to;

(7) To require annually, on or before the 15th day of August, of the president, manager, or principal of every educational institution in this state, a report as required by the superintendent of public instruction; and it is the duty of every president, manager, or principal, to complete and return such forms within such time as the superintendent of public instruction shall direct;

(8) To keep in the superintendent's office a record of all teachers receiving certificates to teach in the common schools of this state;

(9) To issue certificates as provided by law;

(10) To keep in the superintendent's office at the capital of the state, all books and papers pertaining to the business of the superintendent's office, and to keep and preserve in the superintendent's office a complete record of statistics, as well as a record of the meetings of the state board of education;

(11) With the assistance of the office of the attorney general, to decide all points of law which may be submitted to the superintendent in writing by any educational service district superintendent, or that may be submitted to the superintendent by any other person, upon appeal from the decision of any educational service district superintendent; and the superintendent shall publish his or her rulings and decisions from time to time for the information of school officials and teachers; and the superintendent's decision shall be final unless set aside by a court of competent jurisdiction;

(12) To administer oaths and affirmations in the discharge of the superintendent's official duties;

(13) To deliver to his or her successor, at the expiration of the superintendent's term of office, all records, books, maps, documents and papers of whatever kind belonging to the superintendent's office or which may have been received by the superintendent's for the use of the superintendent's office;

(14) To administer family services and programs to promote the state's policy as provided in RCW 74.14A.025;

(15) To promote the adoption of school-based curricula and policies that provide quality, daily physical education for all students, and to encourage policies that provide all students with opportunities for physical activity outside of formal physical education classes;

(16) To perform such other duties as may be required by law.

**--- END ---**