

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 1709

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Education

**Title:** An act relating to the care of students with adrenal insufficiency by parent-designated adults.

**Brief Description:** Addressing the care of students with adrenal insufficiency by parent-designated adults.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Callan, Steele, Goodman, Reed and Hill.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Education: 2/10/25, 2/18/25 [DPS].

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Requires school districts to adopt policies governing the care of students with adrenal insufficiency, which include the possession of legal documents for parent-designated adults (PDAs) to provide care, if needed.
- Establishes eligibility, training, liability, and related provisions for PDAs.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 18 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Shavers, Vice Chair; Rude, Ranking Minority Member; Keaton, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Callan, Chase, Couture, Donaghy, Eslick, Marshall, McEntire, Ortiz-Self, Pollet, Reeves, Rule, Scott and Stonier.

**Staff:** Damian Morden-Snipper (786-7296) and Megan Wargacki (786-7194).

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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 part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

## **Background:**

### Medication Administration at School.

Before attending school, a child with a life-threatening condition must provide to the school a medication or treatment order detailing any medical services that may be required to be performed at school.

Public schools may administer oral, topical, nasal, ear, and eye medications to students in their custody, subject to specified conditions. For example, school districts must adopt policies that address:

- the receipt of a written, current request from a parent or a legal guardian to administer the medication to the student;
- the receipt of a written, current request and instructions from a licensed health professional regarding the administration of prescribed medication to the student; and
- the administration of medication by a designated employee in substantial compliance with the prescription and proper medication procedures. A qualified school nurse must be designated by the school to delegate, train, and supervise the employee in proper medication procedures.

Unless specifically authorized, public schools may not administer injectable medication.

### Parent-Designated Adults.

School districts are required to provide individual health plans for students with diabetes and for students with seizure disorders. School districts must also adopt policies for students with these health conditions that include minimum components, such as the possession of legal documents for a parent-designated adult (PDA) to provide care, if needed.

A PDA is an adult selected by the parents, who may be a school district employee, who volunteers to provide care for the child consistent with the individual health plan. For PDAs of students with diabetes or seizure disorders, training requirements differ depending on whether the PDA is a school district employee. In general, a PDA must receive additional training from a health care professional or expert in care for the child. In addition, the designated school nurse is not responsible for the supervision of the PDA for those procedures that are authorized by the parents.

### Adrenal Insufficiency.

Adrenal insufficiency is a condition in which the body does not produce enough of the hormone cortisol. Cortisol is involved in a wide range of biological functions, including helping regulate the body's response to stress. When stressed, ill, or injured, people with adrenal insufficiency may experience levels of cortisol low enough to present an imminent risk of shock or death. Acute severe adrenal insufficiency is therefore a life-threatening emergency, which can be treated by administering injectable cortisol or a similar oral

medication.

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### **Summary of Substitute Bill:**

School districts are required to provide individual health plans for students with adrenal insufficiency and adopt policies governing the care of these students. The policies adopted by school districts must include specified components, including possession of legal documents for a parent-designated adult (PDA), and comply with requirements for school district policies related to the administration of noninjectable medication by school employees.

Parents of a child with adrenal insufficiency can assign a PDA to provide care and perform procedures for the child consistent with the child's individual health plan. The PDA must be an adult who volunteers for the designation. School district employees may not be subject to disciplinary action for refusing to serve as a PDA. The PDA must complete training, selected by the parents, in the procedures required to provide care for the child, including the administration of an emergency injection of corticosteroid during an adrenal crisis. The training may be provided by the child's parent or by an organization that offers training for school staff or caretakers of children with adrenal insufficiency.

School districts, school employees, and PDAs, as well as agents acting in good faith, and in substantial compliance with statutory requirements and procedures when providing care for students with adrenal insufficiency, are not liable in criminal action or for civil damages as a result of the services provided to students with adrenal insufficiency.

These provisions are not intended to supersede or modify nurse delegation requirements.

### **Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:**

The substitute bill changes the original bill by:

- requiring school districts to provide individual health plans for students with adrenal insufficiency;
  - requiring school districts to adopt policies for students with adrenal insufficiency;
  - providing a definition of a parent-designated adult (PDA);
  - specifying that school district employees are not subject to disciplinary action for refusing to serve as a PDA;
  - setting training standards for PDAs caring for students with adrenal insufficiency;
  - establishing that the new provisions do not supersede nurse delegation statutes; and
  - limiting liability for school districts, school personnel, and PDAs, as well as agents acting in good faith and in substantial compliance with statutory requirements and procedures.
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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on February 19, 2025.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) Not having PDA access means children with adrenal insufficiency are limited in what they can do, and it means parents or nurses must be available in case of emergencies even if parents have to work and not every school has a full-time nurse. It also means schools are bearing significant risk for a student experiencing acute severe adrenal insufficiency. Parents without medical training or medical backgrounds often give emergency injectable medication. Research indicates that someone experiencing acute severe adrenal insufficiency must be given emergency medication within 20 minutes, and there is little risk to giving a shot when it may not be needed. Although PDAs do not replace the role that nurses play, they are a crucial safeguard for students with adrenal insufficiency. There are PDAs for students with diabetes and the care for diabetes requires more skill than giving an emergency injectable medication for adrenal insufficiency. Adding PDAs for adrenal insufficiency will not diminish the role that school nurses play.

(Opposed) None.

(Other) The language of the bill should be modified so that the administration of emergency medication can be delegated by the school nurse. The Legislature increased funding for nurses but not enough students have access to a nurse, and having dedicated staff that is available to give medication will make a big difference. Several states have already taken this approach.

**Persons Testifying:** (In support) Representative Lisa Callan, prime sponsor; Kathryn Mueller; Mark Harper; and Laura Carmichael, Issaquah School District.

(Other) Liz Pray, School Nurse Organization of Washington (SNOW).

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.