

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5003

As of January 15, 2025

Title: An act relating to establishing the school security and preparedness infrastructure grant program.

Brief Description: Establishing the school security and preparedness infrastructure grant program.

Sponsors: Senators Torres, Christian, Dozier, Fortunato, Gildon, Harris, Hasegawa, Krishnadasan, McCune, Salomon, Schoesler, Wagoner, Warnick and Wilson, J..

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/15/25.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Directs the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to create a grant program to increase the physical security of school district facilities, subject to appropriations.
- Requires an annual progress report on this grant program.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Ailey Kato (786-7434)

Background: State law requires school districts to adopt and implement a safe school plan based on guidance and resources provided by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and regional school safety centers established at educational service districts.

In 2013, state law required school districts to consider installing a perimeter security control mechanism or system on all school campuses.

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.

For new school construction projects or remodeling projects of more than 40 percent of an existing school building after July 28, 2013, schools districts must consider school building plans and designs that promote:

- an optimal level of security for the specific school that incorporates evolving technology and best practices to protect against threats;
- direct control and observation of the public entering school grounds; and
- the public entering school grounds through as few entrances as possible.

State law requires school districts to work collaboratively with local law enforcement agencies and school security personnel to develop an emergency response system using evolving technology to expedite the response and arrival of law enforcement when there is a threat or emergency.

Summary of Bill: Subject to appropriations, OSPI must create a competitive grant program to increase the physical security of K-12 public school facilities. School districts may apply for the grants and eligible projects include:

- entrance and door security including panic buttons;
- fencing;
- perimeter security infrastructure;
- construction or infrastructure projects designed to direct the public entering school grounds through as few entrances as possible;
- repair or upgrades of existing physical security infrastructure;
- infrastructure designed to assist with or expedite law enforcement responses to threat or emergencies; and
- planning grants to improve security.

No award per school district may exceed \$2 million in a biennium, and no more than 3 percent of each grant may be expended for management and administration.

Priority for awards must be based on physical security needs and resulting improved safety.

Beginning December 1, 2025, OSPI must annually provide a progress report to the relevant policy and fiscal committees of the Legislature on the total number of grant applications and amount of funding requested and a description of projects approved for funding.

Appropriation: The bill contains a section or sections to limit implementation to the availability of amounts appropriated for that specific purpose.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 7, 2025.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Safety infrastructure in schools is not consistent, and grant funding will help schools meet their safety needs. This grant funding could be distributed quickly and would provide fast results and would help ensure students and staff are safe. Schools would like funding to help address safety at school entrances, panic buttons, and necessary repairs. Child safety is very important.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Nikki Torres, Prime Sponsor; Tyler Muench, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction; Leslie Williams, Conservative Ladies of WA; Gabriel Jacobs.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.