

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5004

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Early Learning & K-12 Education, January 30, 2025

Title: An act relating to emergency response systems in public schools including panic or alert buttons.

Brief Description: Updating emergency response systems in public schools including panic or alert buttons.

Sponsors: Senators Torres, Christian, Dozier, Harris, Krishnadasan, McCune, Salomon, Schoesler and Wilson, J..

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/15/25, 1/30/25 [DPS].

Brief Summary of First Substitute Bill

- Defines emergency response systems as it relates to an existing school district requirement to develop this type of system.
- Directs school districts and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to submit a report on the types of emergency response systems used.
- Applies these existing requirements on charter schools and state-tribal education compact schools.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5004 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Wellman, Chair; Nobles, Vice Chair, K-12; Wilson, C., Vice Chair, Early Learning; Harris, Ranking Member; Cortes, Dozier, Hansen, Krishnadasan and McCune.

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.

Staff: Ailey Kato (786-7434)

Background: 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.

School districts are encouraged to use model policies developed by the School Safety Center in the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).

In 2014, school districts were required to submit a progress report on their implementation of an emergency response system.

Summary of Bill (First Substitute): School districts must work collaboratively with public safety answering points in addition to local law enforcement agencies and safety and security staff to develop an emergency response system.

For the purpose of the existing school district requirement to develop an emergency response system, these systems includes at least one of the following:

- panic or alert buttons that are tied to school administration, school district staff, and emergency response providers;
- live video feed with law enforcement, school district, and school access;
- live audio feed with law enforcement, school district, and school access;
- remote control access to doors; or
- live interactive two-way communications.

The encouragement for school districts to use model OSPI policies is removed.

School districts must submit another progress report by October 1, 2025. By December 1, 2025, OSPI must compile the information submitted by school districts and report to the Legislature on the types of emergency response systems used by school districts.

These requirements are applied to charter schools and state-tribal education compact schools.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION COMMITTEE (First Substitute):

- Adds that school districts, charter schools, and state-tribal education compact schools must work with public answering points, in addition to law enforcement and safety and security staff, to develop an emergency response system.
- Specifies that the emergency response system includes at least one of the following systems that are listed.
- Removes the reference to an interconnection with an alert and communication system

maintained by the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs.

Appropriation: None.

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 on Original Bill: *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* PRO: Many school districts already have these systems in place. This bill is not placing new requirements on school districts but having them consider panic buttons when they are upgrading their systems. Time equals life, so this bill will help reduce the time it will take for emergency responders to arrive at a school. Badges with panic buttons can help save lives and makes sure that help arrives at the needed location. Being able to control access to buildings is crucial to slowing down an attack and will keep children safe.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Nikki Torres, Prime Sponsor; Lori Alhadeff, Make Our Schools Safe; Sara Cordova, Yakima School District 7; Leslie Williams, Conservative Ladies of WA; Gabriel Jacobs.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:

CON: Asenith M Herbert Hill.