

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 1922

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

**Title:** An act relating to establishing a grant program for the purchase and installation of vape detectors in public schools.

**Brief Description:** Establishing a grant program for the purchase and installation of vape detectors in public schools.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Couture, McClintock, Christian, Leavitt, Rude, Schmidt, Waters, Connors, Barnard, Callan, Rule, Cheney, Sandlin, Harris, Riccelli, Pollet, Davis and Griffey.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Education: 1/23/24, 1/30/24 [DP].

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Directs the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, in consultation with the Department of Health, to establish and administer a grant program to provide funds to school districts, charter schools, and state-tribal education compact schools for the purchase and installation of vape detectors in public schools.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Rude, Ranking Minority Member; McEntire, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Couture, Eslick, Harris, McClintock, Nance, Pollet, Steele and Timmons.

**Minority Report:** Without recommendation. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Shavers, Vice Chair; Ortiz-Self and Stonier.

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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.*

**Staff:** Ethan Moreno (786-7386).

**Background:**

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

In addition to its constitutional charge of supervising all matters pertaining to public schools, the Superintendent of Public Instruction and its office has numerous and broad responsibilities prescribed in statute, including:

- making rules and regulations necessary for the administration of public education requirements;
- preparing courses of study and other materials and books for the discharge of education duties;
- fulfilling financial responsibilities, including distributing legislatively allocated funds to districts for the operation of the public school system, and awarding numerous state and federally funded grants; and
- satisfying numerous reporting and other duties assigned by the Legislature.

Department of Health.

The Department of Health (DOH) administers various programs and services that promote public health through disease and injury prevention, immunization, newborn screening, professional and health care facility licensing, and public education. The DOH is also involved in the promotion of safe and healthy schools, including duties related to environmental health, immunization, and sexual health education.

Healthy Youth Survey.

Washington's Healthy Youth Survey (HYS) is a collaborative effort of the Health Care Authority, the DOH, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the Liquor and Cannabis Board. The survey is administered biennially statewide to students in grades 6 through 12.

The HYS measures health risk behaviors that contribute to illness, death, and social problems among youth in Washington through questions about students' thoughts, feelings, and behaviors on a variety of health and safety topics, including school climate and community safety, anxiety and depression, substance use and abuse, and healthy eating habits and physical activity.

The HYS includes questions about the use of vape pens and electronic cigarettes, the battery powered devices that usually contain a liquid that is vaporized and inhaled by the user.

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**Summary of Bill:**

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), subject to funding provisions and in consultation with the Department of Health, must establish and administer a grant

program to provide funds to school districts, charter schools, and state-tribal education compact schools for the purchase and installation of vape detectors in public schools.

Applications for grant funds must be made on forms developed by the OSPI, and awarded grant funds must be to school districts and qualifying schools demonstrating a need for the detectors based on data from the Healthy Youth Survey or other statewide or local data sources for student health practices or trends.

Grant applicants must identify resources or programs of the school district or school that may be combined with grant funds to increase student knowledge about the health hazards associated with using vapor products. Grant recipients must provide annual information to the OSPI assessing the effectiveness of the detectors and other health promotion measures of the school district or school in reducing the student use of vapor products on school properties.

School districts, charter schools, and state-tribal education compact schools may reapply for grant funds in subsequent years or award cycles.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) During the last school year, a student overdosed from using a vape pen that was laced with a drug. This happens often and is a pervasive problem in schools. Vape sensors are employed in some schools and are fantastic pieces of technologies, but they are a bit expensive. It is important to give schools tools for vape use deterrence. Vape sensors also can protect from violence, as they pick up audio.

(Opposed) Schools see vape detectors as one way to make school bathrooms safer for schools and to refer students to school and community supports. But installing vape sensors, at least by themselves, is not an effective approach as they are very easily tampered with or vandalized and provide frequent false positives. The sensors do not address the underlying decisions to use vapes. Schools would get better results through research-based approaches. Schools do not receive any direct state funding for reducing vaping or smoking, but that money would be needed for evidence-based approaches. The bill could be restructured to provide positive long-term benefits to schools and communities.

(Other) Principals and vice principals are very concerned about vape use in middle and high

schools and see their use as the number one detractor to learning. Students get addicted to nicotine easily through vape pens that contain concentrated nicotine. Vape sensors can improve bathroom culture, but responding to frequent sensor alarms can overwhelm staff. Vaping sensors will not get to the heart of the problem and vaping will still exist. Prevention education and cessation supports are preferred responses to student vaping.

This bill looks at the wrong part of the problem. Vape sensors are not a proven intervention to reduce youth vape usage; the students will find other places to vape. Funding evidence-based practices would be better, including a tobacco education program.

**Persons Testifying:** (In support) Representative Travis Couture, prime sponsor.

(Opposed) Scott Waller, Washington Association for Substance Abuse and Violence Prevention.

(Other) Alex Hamasaki, American Heart Association; and Roz Thompson, Association of Washington School Principals.

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