



Senate Fiscal Agency
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BILL ANALYSIS

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Senate Bill 882 (as reported without amendment)
Sponsor: Senator David Knezek
Committee: Oversight

Date Completed: 4-5-18

RATIONALE

Over the past two decades, the issue of school safety and security has become a top priority for school officials. Following the Columbine High School shooting in 1999, school districts across the country implemented new school security measures, such as installing metal detectors, banning backpacks, and instituting "zero-tolerance" policies for school violence, weapons, and drugs. However, a shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in 2012 and the recent shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in February 2018 have led many people to call for additional school security measures to ensure student safety. It has been suggested that school boards in Michigan should be allowed to meet in closed sessions in order to discuss security planning measures and procedures. Currently, however, the Open Meetings Act requires school boards to conduct business in meetings that are open to the public.

CONTENT

The bill would amend the Open Meetings Act to allow a school board to meet in a closed session to consider security planning.

Under the Act, all meetings of a public body must be open to the public and held in a place available to the general public. However, the Act allows a public body to meet in a closed session for limited purposes.

The bill would add that a school board could meet in a closed session to consider security planning to address existing threats or prevent potential threats to the safety of students and staff.

The bill would take effect 90 days after its enactment.

MCL 15.268

ARGUMENTS

(Please note: The arguments contained in this analysis originate from sources outside the Senate Fiscal Agency. The Senate Fiscal Agency neither supports nor opposes legislation.)

Supporting Argument

Today, matters of school security are on the minds of all stakeholders involved with local school communities, and discussions of school security and student safety dominate the professional conversation of school leaders at the district, county, and State levels. The bill would afford school boards the opportunity to meet with school leadership during a closed session so matters of school safety and security could be discussed confidentially. While school boards honor transparency and abide by the Open Meetings Act, they also must be able to ensure that certain components of school security planning and crisis prevention remain private. Public input and comment still would

be allowed during regular board meetings. The bill simply would add an additional layer of security and protection to schools around the State.

Legislative Analyst: Stephen Jackson

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would have no fiscal impact on State or local government.

Fiscal Analyst: Cory Savino

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.