SENATE BILL NO. 2027

AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-3-83, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO AUTHORIZE STATE FUNDING OF SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION UNDER THE SCHOOL SAFETY GRANT PROGRAM; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

SECTION 1. Section 37-3-83, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

37-3-83. (1) There is established within the State Department of Education, using only existing staff and resources, a School Safety Grant Program, available to all eligible public school districts, to assist in financing programs to provide school safety. However, no monies from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families grant may be used for the School Safety Grant Program.

(2) The school board of each school district, with the assistance of the State Department of Education School Safety Center, shall adopt a comprehensive local school district school safety plan and shall update the plan on an annual basis.
(3) Subject to the extent of appropriations available, the School Safety Grant Program shall offer any of the following specific preventive services, and other additional services appropriate to the most current school district school safety plan:

(a) Metal detectors;
(b) Video surveillance cameras, communications equipment and monitoring equipment for classrooms, school buildings, school grounds and school buses;
(c) Crisis management/action teams responding to school violence;
(d) Violence prevention training, conflict resolution training, and other appropriate training designated by the State Department of Education for faculty and staff; * * *
(e) School safety personnel * * *; and
(f) School Resource Officers (SRO) under the provisions of subsection (4).

(4) (a) For purposes of this subsection (4), "School Resource Officers" shall mean sworn law enforcement officers responsible for safety and crime prevention in schools, who are employed by a local police department or sheriff's department and assigned to local school administrators to create a safer environment for both students and staff. School Resource Officers have the power to make arrests, respond to calls for service and document incidents, and may have additional duties, including
mentoring and conducting presentations on youth-related issues. School Resource Officers shall have at least forty (40) hours of specialized training in school policing before being assigned by the local law enforcement agency.

(b) Each local school district of this state may annually apply for school safety grant funds to reimburse the local law enforcement agency for the employment and training of School Resource Officers, subject to appropriation therefor by the Legislature. Grant funds for School Resource Officers shall be based upon an amount equal to Forty Dollars ($40.00) per student in average daily attendance in K-Grade 12 in the school or school district. In order to be eligible for such program, each local school board desiring to participate shall apply to the State Department of Education by May 31 before the beginning of the applicable fiscal year on forms provided by the department. The State Department of Education shall determine by July 1 of each succeeding year which local school districts have submitted approved applications for School Resource Officer funding.

(***5) Each local school district of this state may annually apply for school safety grant funds subject to appropriations by the Legislature. School safety grants shall include a base grant amount plus an additional amount per student in average daily attendance in the school or school district. The base grant amount and amount per student shall be determined by the State Board of Education, subject to specific appropriation
therefor by the Legislature. In order to be eligible for such
program, each local school board desiring to participate shall
apply to the State Department of Education by May 31 before the
beginning of the applicable fiscal year on forms provided by the
department, and shall be required to establish a local School
Safety Task Force to involve members of the community in the
school safety effort. The State Department of Education shall
determine by July 1 of each succeeding year which local school
districts have submitted approved applications for school safety
grants.

(***6) As part of the School Safety Grant Program, the
State Department of Education may conduct a pilot program to
research the feasibility of using video camera equipment in the
classroom to address the following:

(a) Determine if video cameras in the classroom reduce
student disciplinary problems;

(b) Enable teachers to present clear and convincing
evidence of a student's disruptive behavior to the student, the
principal, the superintendent and the student's parents; and

(c) Enable teachers to review teaching performance and
receive diagnostic feedback for developmental purposes.

(***7) Any local school district may use
audio/visual-monitoring equipment in classrooms, hallways,
buildings, grounds and buses for the purpose of monitoring school
disciplinary problems.
(***8) As a component of the comprehensive local school district school safety plan required under subsection (2) of this section, the school board of a school district may adopt and implement a policy addressing sexual abuse of children, to be known as "Erin's Law Awareness." Any policy adopted under this subsection may include or address, but need not be limited to, the following:

(a) Methods for increasing teacher, student and parental awareness of issues regarding sexual abuse of children, including knowledge of likely warning signs indicating that a child may be a victim of sexual abuse;

(b) Educational information for parents or guardians, which may be included in the school handbook, on the warning signs of a child being abused, along with any needed assistance, referral or resource information;

(c) Training for school personnel on child sexual abuse;

(d) Age-appropriate curriculum for students in prekindergarten through fifth grade;

(e) Actions that a child who is a victim of sexual abuse should take to obtain assistance and intervention;

(f) Counseling and resources available for students affected by sexual abuse; and

(g) Emotional and educational support for a child who has been abused to enable the child to be successful in school.
SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2019.