

By: Representatives Barton, Roberson

To: Education

HOUSE BILL NO. 1379

1 AN ACT TO CREATE "THE STUDENTS SAFE AT SCHOOL ACT"; TO DEFINE
2 TERMS UNDER THE ACT; TO OUTLINE STANDARDS; TO PROVIDE FOR STUDENT
3 HEALTH AND WELLNESS PROTOCOLS; TO SET FORTH NOTICE REQUIREMENTS;
4 TO ADDRESS STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN SHOOTER DRILLS; TO ADDRESS
5 STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN ACTIVE SHOOTER SIMULATIONS; TO REQUIRE
6 VIOLENCE PREVENTION TRAINING; TO PROVIDE FOR STUDENT PARTICIPATION
7 IN SAFETY PLANNING; TO PROVIDE FOR PUBLICATION OF VENDORS; TO
8 CREATE GUIDELINES TO MEASURE EFFECTIVENESS OF DRILLS; TO CREATE
9 THE SCHOOL EMERGENCY RESPONSE MAPPING DATA GRANT PROGRAM WITHIN
10 THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL; TO AUTHORIZE EACH SCHOOL
11 DISTRICT, CHARTER SCHOOL GOVERNING BOARD AND PRIVATE SCHOOL
12 GOVERNING BOARD, IN CONSULTATION WITH LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT
13 AGENCIES, TO PROVIDE SCHOOL MAPPING DATA FOR EACH SCHOOL IN THE
14 AREA OF THE LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY'S JURISDICTION; TO REQUIRE THE
15 ENTITY PRODUCING THE DATA TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING DATA TO
16 THE SCHOOLS AND LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AND PUBLIC SAFETY AGENCIES
17 FOR USE IN RESPONSE TO EMERGENCIES; TO PRESCRIBE THE REQUIRED
18 COMPONENTS OF WHAT SCHOOL MAPPING DATA SHOULD ENTAIL; TO REQUIRE
19 THAT UPDATES TO THE SCHOOL MAPPING DATA BE ACCESSIBLE IN SOFTWARE
20 PLATFORMS; TO ESTABLISH THE SCHOOL EMERGENCY RESPONSE MAPPING DATA
21 GRANT PROGRAM IN THE STATE TREASURY; TO BRING FORWARD SECTION
22 37-11-5, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, FOR THE PURPOSE OF POSSIBLE
23 AMENDMENT; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

25 **SECTION 1.** This act shall be known and may be cited as the
26 "Students Safe at School Act."



27 **SECTION 2.** For the purposes of this act the following words
28 and phrases shall have the meaning ascribed in this section unless
29 the context shall otherwise require:

30 (a) "Active shooter drill means an emergency
31 preparedness drill designed to teach students, teachers, school
32 personnel and staff how to respond in the event of an armed
33 intruder on campus or an armed assailant in the immediate vicinity
34 of the school, and which may not include any sensorial components,
35 activities or elements that mimic a real-life shooting. An active
36 shooter drill, including practice active shooter drills, is not an
37 active shooter simulation.

38 (b) "Active shooter simulation" means an emergency
39 exercise, including full-scale or functional exercises, designed
40 to teach adult school personnel and staff how to respond in the
41 event of an armed intruder on campus or an armed assailant in the
42 immediate vicinity of the school, and which incorporates
43 activities or elements mimicking a real-life shooting, which
44 include, but are not limited to, simulation of tactical
45 response by law enforcement. An active shooter simulation is not
46 an active shooter drill.

47 (c) "Evidence-based" means a program or practice that
48 demonstrates any of the following:

49 (i) A statistically significant effect on relevant
50 outcomes based on any of the following:



51 1. Strong evidence from not fewer than one
52 (1) well-designed and well-implemented experimental study;

53 2. Moderate evidence from not fewer than one
54 (1) well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental study;

55 3. Promising evidence from not fewer than one
56 (1) well-designed and well-implemented correlational study with
57 statistical controls for selection bias; or

58 (ii) A rationale based on high-quality research
59 findings or positive evaluations that the program or practice is
60 likely to improve relevant outcomes, which shall also include the
61 ongoing efforts to examine the effects of the program or practice.

62 (d) "Department of Education" means the State
63 Department of Education.

64 (e) "Department of Mental Health" means the Mississippi
65 Department of Mental Health.

66 (f) "Full-scale exercise" means an operations-based
67 exercise that is typically the most complex and resource-intensive
68 of the exercise types and often involves multiple agencies,
69 jurisdictions, organizations and real-time movement of resources.

70 (g) "Functional exercise" means an operations-based
71 exercise designed to assess and evaluate capabilities and
72 functions while in a realistic, real-time environment, however,
73 movement of resources is usually simulated.



74 **SECTION 3.** (1) Every active shooter drill, including
75 practice active shooter drills, undertaken with students in Grades
76 K-12 shall be:

77 (a) Accessible;

78 (b) Developmentally appropriate and age-appropriate,
79 including appropriate safety verbiage and vocabulary;

80 (c) Culturally aware;

81 (d) Trauma-informed; and

82 (e) Including of accommodations for students with
83 mobility restrictions, sensory needs, developmental or physical
84 disabilities, mental health needs, and auditory or visual
85 limitations.

86 (2) Before a practice active shooter drill can be held, it
87 shall meet the requirements of subsection (1).

88 **SECTION 4.** (1) Protocols for active shooter drills,
89 including practice active shooter drills, shall include a
90 reasonable amount of time, immediately following the drill, for
91 teachers to debrief with their students, which shall:

92 (a) Be provided to students before regular classroom
93 activity can be resumed; and

94 (b) Allow students to access mental health postvention
95 services available on campus, including, counselors, school
96 psychologists or social workers.

97 (2) A practice active shooter drill cannot be combined or



98 conducted with any other type of emergency preparedness drill
99 required under Section 37-11-5.

100 (3) When an active shooter drill is a practice drill, it
101 must be announced as a practice drill before the commencement of
102 the practice drill using age-appropriate language and, at a
103 minimum, informing students that there is no immediate danger to
104 life and safety.

105 **SECTION 5.** (1) Before a practice active shooter drill is
106 held, the school or charter school in which the practice drill is
107 to take place, shall provide notice to every student's parent or
108 legal guardian.

109 (2) Notice of an upcoming practice active shooter drill
110 should be provided at least twenty-four (24) hours before the
111 drill is scheduled to take place. The notice shall state the
112 right of the parent or legal guardian to opt their student out of
113 participating. If a student is opted out of participating in
114 practice active shooter drills, no negative mark shall be added to
115 the student's general school attendance record nor shall
116 nonparticipation alone make a student ineligible to participate in
117 or attend school activities.

118 (3) The State Department of Education shall ensure the
119 availability of alternative safety education for students who are
120 opted out, or otherwise exempted from participating in practice
121 active shooter drills, be appropriate for students with mental



122 health needs, mobility restrictions, sensory needs, developmental
123 or physical disabilities and auditory or visual limitations.

124 (4) Where notice cannot be provided in advance, notice that
125 a practice active shooter drill took place shall be provided to
126 every student's parent or legal guardian within twenty-four (24)
127 hours of the drill having taken place.

128 **SECTION 6.** (1) No student in Grades K-12 shall be required
129 to participate in a practice active shooter drill where the
130 training model used to teach school personnel how to conduct a
131 proper drill does not meet the standards set forth in Sections 3
132 and 4 of this act.

133 (2) (a) No student in Grades K-12 shall be required to
134 participate in an active shooter simulation. No active shooter
135 simulation may take place during regular school hours if a
136 majority of students are present or expected to be present at the
137 school.

138 (b) Parents or legal guardians of students
139 in Grades 9-12 shall have the opportunity to opt their student
140 into participation in active shooter simulations. Parents or
141 legal guardian opting in must provide written notice to their
142 student's school, which such notice, at a minimum, must clearly
143 state the student has permission to participate in the simulation.

144 **SECTION 7.** (1) Every school district and charter school
145 undertaking an active shooter drill, including practice active



146 shooter drills, shall provide students in Grades 6-12 at least one
147 (1) hour or one (1) standard class period of violence prevention
148 training annually.

149 (2) The violence prevention training required in subsection
150 (1) shall be evidence-based and may be delivered in-person,
151 live-virtual or digitally. Training, at a minimum, shall teach
152 students the following:

153 (a) How to identify observable warning signs and
154 signals of an individual who may be at risk of harming themselves
155 or others;

156 (b) The importance of taking threats seriously and
157 seeking help; and

158 (c) The steps that can be taken to report dangerous,
159 violent, threatening, harmful or potentially harmful activity.

160 (3) Within one hundred twenty (120) days of this law taking
161 effect, the Department of Education shall develop a list of
162 evidence-based trainings that school districts and charter schools
163 may use to fulfill the requirements of this section, including
164 no-cost programming, if any, and shall:

165 (a) Post the list publicly on the department's website;
166 and

167 (b) Update the list every two (2) years.

168 (4) School districts and charter schools may use a training
169 that does not appear on the list if the training meets the
170 requirements set forth in subsection (2) of this section.



171 **SECTION 8.** School districts and charter schools shall ensure
172 students have the opportunity to contribute to their school's
173 safety and violence-prevention planning. These opportunities
174 shall align with the recommendations of the Federal Emergency
175 Management Agency's multi-hazard planning for schools, including,
176 but not limited to:

177 (a) Providing student opportunities for leadership
178 related to prevention and safety;

179 (b) Providing encouragement and support to students in
180 establishing clubs and programs focused on safety; and

181 (c) Providing students with the opportunity to seek help
182 from adults, and to learn about prevention connected to topics
183 including bullying, sexual harassment, sexual assault and suicide.

184 **SECTION 9.** (1) The State Department of Education shall make
185 publicly available, on its website, a list of vendors who teach
186 school personnel, including school safety officers, how to conduct
187 active shooter drills. At a minimum, the vendor list must include
188 the name of the school or charter school, the name of the vendor
189 and the vendor's website address, if available. The vendor list
190 shall be updated every two (2) years.

191 (2) For the purpose of this section, the term "vendor" shall
192 include for-profit and nonprofit entities, as well as public
193 agencies.

194 **SECTION 10.** (1) The State Department of Education shall, in
195 partnership with the Department of Mental Health, create



196 guidelines for measuring the effectiveness of active shooter
197 drills. The guidelines shall:

198 (a) Be made available to every school district or
199 charter school that conducts an active shooter drill, including
200 practice active shooter drills; and

201 (b) Provide parents, legal guardians, students,
202 staff and school-based mental health professionals the
203 right to review and comment on the active shooter drill
204 guidelines.

205 (2) Every local school board and charter school governing
206 board shall hold at least one (1) meeting every year to review the
207 following:

208 (a) The efficacy and effects of each school's active
209 shooter drills, including practice active shooter drills;

210 (b) The impact of active shooter drills on the safety
211 of students and staff; and

212 (c) The impact of active shooter drills, including
213 practice active shooter drills, on the mental health and wellness
214 of students and staff.

215 **SECTION 11.** (1) (a) There is created within the Office of
216 the Attorney General, the School Emergency Response Mapping Data
217 Grant Program, for the purpose of establishing a single, verified
218 source of mapping data for each school in the State of Mississippi
219 that is standardized, accurate and accessible to public safety



220 agencies and which ensures efficient responses to any emergency on
221 a school campus.

222 (b) Each school district, charter school governing
223 board and governing board of each private K-12 school, in
224 consultation with local law enforcement agencies having
225 appropriate jurisdiction in the county or municipality wherein the
226 school district is located, may apply to receive funds from the
227 program to provide school mapping data for each public, charter
228 and private school in that county or municipality. The school
229 district and respective charter school and private school
230 governing board shall use the funds by the Legislature into the
231 School Emergency Response Mapping Data Grant to satisfy all of the
232 requirements of this section, which may include procuring a vendor
233 to provide such data.

234 (2) The entity producing the data is responsible for
235 providing the data to the school district and local law
236 enforcement and public safety agencies for use in response to
237 emergencies.

238 (3) School mapping data must:

239 (a) Be provided in an electronic or a digital
240 format to assist first responders in responding to emergencies at
241 schools;

242 (b) Be compatible with software platforms used by
243 local, state and federal law enforcement and public safety
244 agencies that provide emergency services to the specific



245 school for which the data is provided without:

246 (i) Requiring those agencies to purchase
247 additional software; or

248 (ii) Requiring a fee to view or access the data;

249 (c) Be compatible with security software platforms in
250 use by the specific school for which the data is provided without:

251 (i) Requiring those agencies to purchase
252 additional software; or

253 (ii) Requiring a fee to view or access the data;

254 (d) Be in a printable format and, if requested in
255 addition to paragraph (a), be in a digital file format that can be
256 integrated into interactive mobile platforms in use;

257 (e) Be verified by an entity producing data for
258 accuracy which performed a walk-through of school buildings and
259 grounds;

260 (f) Be oriented true north;

261 (g) Include accurate floor plans overlaid on a current,
262 verified aerial imagery of the campus;

263 (h) Contain site-specific labeling that matches the
264 structure of school buildings, including room labels, hallway
265 names, and external door or stairwell numbers and locations of
266 hazards, critical utility locations, key boxes, automated external
267 defibrillators and trauma kits;



268 (i) Contain site-specific labeling that matches the
269 school grounds, including parking areas, athletic fields, school
270 and surrounding roads and neighboring properties; and

271 (j) Be overlaid with gridded X and Y coordinates.

272 (4) Any future updates to the school mapping data shall be
273 accessible in software platforms used by local, county, state and
274 federal public safety agencies that provide emergency services to
275 specific schools.

276 (5) Public safety agencies and school districts will have
277 perpetual access to all school mapping data developed for this
278 grant program at no cost.

279 **SECTION 12.** (1) There is created in the State Treasury a
280 special fund to be known as the School Emergency Response Mapping
281 Data Grant Program Fund, which shall be administered by the Office
282 of the Attorney General. The purpose of the fund shall be to
283 provide funding to school mapping data for each public, charter
284 and private school to ensure efficient responses to an emergency
285 on a school campus. Monies in the fund shall be expended by the
286 Attorney General, upon appropriation by the Legislature. The fund
287 shall be a continuing fund, not subject to fiscal-year
288 limitations, and shall consist of:

289 (a) Monies appropriated by the Legislature for the
290 purposes of funding the School Emergency Response Mapping Data
291 Grant Program;

292 (b) The interest accruing to the fund;



293 (c) Any monies received from the federal government for
294 such purposes;

295 (d) Donations; and

296 (e) Monies received from such other sources as may be
297 provided by law.

298 **SECTION 13.** Section 37-11-5, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
299 brought forward as follows:

300 37-11-5. (1) It shall be the duty of the principals and
301 teachers in all public school buildings to instruct the pupils in
302 the methods of fire drills and to practice fire drills until all
303 the pupils in the school are familiar with the methods of escape.
304 Such fire drills shall be conducted often enough to keep such
305 pupils well drilled. It shall be the further duty of such
306 principals and teachers to instruct the pupils in all programs of
307 emergency management as may be designated by the State Department
308 of Education.

309 (2) It shall be the further duty of such principals and
310 teachers to develop and conduct an active shooter drill within the
311 first sixty (60) days of each new school semester for students,
312 teachers and staff.

313 **SECTION 14.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
314 and after July 1, 2024.

