

By: Representative Roberson

To: Education

HOUSE BILL NO. 1627

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:



1. Strong evidence from not fewer than one well-designed and well-implemented experimental study;
2. Moderate evidence from not fewer than one well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental study;
3. Promising evidence from not fewer than one well-designed and well-implemented correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias; or
 - (ii) A rationale based on high-quality research findings or positive evaluations that the program or practice is likely to improve relevant outcomes, which shall also include the ongoing efforts to examine the effects of the program or practice.

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

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

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

(g) "Functional exercise" means an operations-based exercise designed to assess and evaluate capabilities and functions while in a realistic, real-time environment, however, 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 concise and age-appropriate language and,
103 at a minimum, informing students that there is no immediate danger
104 to 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. Alternative safety education shall provide
122 essential safety instruction through less sensorial safety



123 training methods and shall be appropriate for students with mental
124 health needs, mobility restrictions, sensory needs, developmental
125 or physical disabilities and auditory or visual limitations.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

158 (b) The importance of taking threats seriously and
159 seeking help; and

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

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

167 (a) Post the list publicly on the department's website;
168 and

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

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

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

179 (a) Providing student opportunities for leadership
180 related to prevention and safety;

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

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

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

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

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



198 guidelines for measuring the effectiveness of active shooter
199 drills. The guidelines shall:

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

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

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

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

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

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

217 **SECTION 11.** Section 37-11-5, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
218 brought forward as follows:

219 37-11-5. (1) It shall be the duty of the principals and
220 teachers in all public school buildings to instruct the pupils in
221 the methods of fire drills and to practice fire drills until all
222 the pupils in the school are familiar with the methods of escape.



223 Such fire drills shall be conducted often enough to keep such
224 pupils well drilled. It shall be the further duty of such
225 principals and teachers to instruct the pupils in all programs of
226 emergency management as may be designated by the State Department
227 of Education.

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

232 **SECTION 12.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
233 and after July 1, 2025.

