

By: Senator(s) Boyd

To: Education

SENATE BILL NO. 2185

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; AND FOR
9 RELATED PURPOSES.

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

11 **SECTION 1.** This act shall be known and may be cited as "The
12 Students Safe at School Act."

13 **SECTION 2.** For the purposes of this act the following words
14 and phrases shall have the meaning ascribed herein unless the
15 context shall otherwise require:

16 (a) "Active shooter drill" means an emergency preparedness
17 drill designed to teach students, teachers, school personnel and
18 staff how to respond in the event of an armed intruder on campus
19 or an armed assailant in the immediate vicinity of the school. A
20 practice active shooter drill may not include any sensorial
21 components, activities or elements which mimic a real-life



22 shooting. An active shooter drill, including practice active
23 shooter drills, is not an active shooter simulation.

24 (b) "Active shooter simulation" means an emergency exercise,
25 including full-scale or functional exercises, designed to teach
26 adult school personnel and staff how to respond in the event of an
27 armed intruder on campus or an armed assailant in the immediate
28 vicinity of the school and which incorporates activities or
29 elements mimicking a real-life shooting. Activities or elements
30 mimicking a real-life shooting include, but are not limited to,
31 simulation of tactical response by law enforcement. An active
32 shooter simulation is not an active shooter drill.

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

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

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

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

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

44 (ii) A rationale based on high-quality research
45 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 Mississippi 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.

SECTION 3. (1) Every active shooter drill, including practice active shooter drills, undertaken with students in grades K – 12 shall be:

- (a) Accessible;
- (b) Developmentally appropriate and age-appropriate, including appropriate safety verbiage and vocabulary;
- (c) Culturally aware;
- (d) Trauma-informed; and
- (e) Including of accommodations for students with mobility restrictions, sensory needs, developmental or physical



disabilities, mental health needs, and auditory or visual limitations.

(2) Before a practice active shooter drill can be held it shall meet the requirements of subsection (1)(a) through (e) of this section.

SECTION 4. (1) Protocols for active shooter drills, including practice active shooter drills, shall include a reasonable amount of time, immediately following the drill, for teachers to debrief with their students as set forth herein:

(a) The opportunity to debrief shall be provided to students before regular classroom activity can be resumed.

(b) During the debrief period, students must be allowed to access mental health postvention services available on campus including counselors, school psychologists or social workers.

(2) A practice active shooter drill cannot be combined or conducted consecutively with any other type of emergency preparedness drill.

(3) Where an active shooter drill is a practice drill, it must be announced as a practice drill prior to commencing using the following procedure:

The announcement shall use concise and age-appropriate language and, at a minimum, inform students there is no immediate danger to life and safety.



SECTION 5.

(1) Before a practice active shooter drill is held, the school in which the practice drill is to take place, shall provide notice to every student's parent or legal guardian.

(2) Notice of an upcoming practice active shooter drill should be provided at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to the drill taking place.

(a) Such notice shall state the right of the parent or legal guardian to opt their student out of participating.

(b) If a student is opted out of participating in practice active shooter drills, no negative mark shall be added to the student's general school attendance record nor shall non-participation alone make a student ineligible to participate in, or attend, school activities.

(3) The Department of Education shall ensure the availability of alternative safety education for students who are opted out, or otherwise exempted from, participating in practice active shooter drills.

Alternative safety education shall provide essential safety instruction through less sensorial safety training methods and shall be appropriate for students with mental health needs, mobility restrictions, sensory needs, developmental or physical disabilities, and auditory or visual limitations.

(4) Where notice cannot be provided in advance, notice that a practice active shooter drill took place shall be provided to



every student's parent or legal guardian within 24 hours of the drill having taken place.

SECTION 6. No student in grades K-12 shall be required to participate in a practice active shooter drill where the training model used to teach school personnel how to conduct a proper drill does not meet the standards set forth in Section 1 of this act.

SECTION 7. (1) No student in grades K-12 shall be required to participate in an active shooter simulation.

(2) No active shooter simulation may take place during regular school hours if a majority of students are present, or expected to be present, at the school.

(3) Parents or legal guardians of students in grades nine through twelve shall have the opportunity to opt their student into participation in active shooter simulations.

(4) Parents or legal guardians so opting must provide written notice to their student's school. At a minimum, this notice must clearly state the student has permission to participate in the simulation.

SECTION 8. (1) Every school district and charter school undertaking an active shooter drill, including practice active shooter drills, shall provide students in grades 6-12 at least one (1) hour, or one (1) standard class period, of violence prevention training annually.



(2) Such training shall be evidence-based and may be delivered in-person, live-virtual, or digitally. Training shall, at a minimum, teach students the following:

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

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

(c) The steps they can take to report dangerous, violent, threatening, harmful or potentially harmful activity.

(3) The Department of Education shall, within one hundred and twenty (120) days of this law taking effect, develop a list of evidence-based trainings school districts and charter schools that may be used to fulfill the requirements of this section, including no-cost programming, if any.

(4) The department shall post the list publicly on the department's website and update the list every two (2) years.

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

SECTION 9. Districts shall ensure students the opportunity to contribute to their school's safety and violence-prevention planning. These opportunities shall align with the recommendations of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's multi-hazard planning for schools, including but not limited to:



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

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

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

SECTION 10. (1) The Department of Education shall make publicly available, on its website, a list of vendors who teach school personnel, including school safety officers, how to conduct active shooter drills. This list shall be updated every two (2) years.

At a minimum this list must include the name of the school, the name of the vendor, and vendor's website address if available.

(2) For the purposes of this section, "vendor" shall include for-profit and non-profit entities, as well as public agencies.

SECTION 11. (1) The State Department of Education shall, in partnership with the Department of Mental Health, create guidelines for measuring the effectiveness of active shooter drills.

(2) These guidelines shall be made available to every school district or charter school that conducts an active shooter drill, including practice active shooter drills.

(3) Parents, legal guardians, students, teachers, school staff and school-based mental health professionals shall have the



190 right to review and comment on the active shooter drill
191 guidelines.

192 (4) Every local school board shall hold at least one (1)
193 meeting every year to review the following:

194 (a) Efficacy and effects of each school's active
195 shooter drills, including practice active shooter drills;

196 (b) Impact of active shooter drills on the safety of
197 students and staff; and

198 (c) Impact of active shooter drills, including practice
199 active shooter drills, on the mental health and wellness of
200 students and staff.

201 **SECTION 12.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
202 and after January 1, 2026.

