

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

46 likely to improve relevant outcomes, which shall also include the  
47 ongoing efforts to examine the effects of the program or practice.

48 (d) "Department of Education" means the Mississippi  
49 Department of Education.

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

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

56 (g) "Functional exercise" means an operations-based exercise  
57 designed to assess and evaluate capabilities and functions while  
58 in a realistic, real-time environment; however, movement of  
59 resources is usually simulated.

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

63 (a) Accessible;

64 (b) Developmentally appropriate and age-appropriate,  
65 including appropriate safety verbiage and vocabulary;

66 (c) Culturally aware;

67 (d) Trauma-informed; and

68 (e) Including of accommodations for students with  
69 mobility restrictions, sensory needs, developmental or physical

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



165 (a) Providing student opportunities for leadership  
166 related to prevention and safety;  
167 (b) Providing encouragement and support to students in  
168 establishing clubs and programs focused on safety; and  
169 (c) Providing students with the opportunity to seek  
170 help from adults and to learn about prevention connected to topics  
171 including bullying, sexual harassment, sexual assault and suicide.

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

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

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

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

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

188 (3) Parents, legal guardians, students, teachers, school  
189 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.

