

By: Representatives Barton, Roberson

To: Education

HOUSE BILL NO. 1379
(As Passed the House)

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; TO CREATE THE MISSISSIPPI SCHOOL SAFETY TASK FORCE; TO
24 PROVIDE FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS OF THE TASK FORCE; TO
25 PROVIDE THAT THE TASK FORCE WILL CONTINUALLY STUDY ENSURING AND
26 ENHANCING SAFE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS FOR STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND
27 STAFF IN MISSISSIPPI, AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF BEST PRACTICES FOR
28 PREVENTION AND RESPONSE; TO PROVIDE FOR THE TASK FORCE TO CONDUCT
29 ITS BUSINESS; TO REQUIRE THAT THE TASK FORCE WILL REPORT ITS
30 FINDINGS AND ANY RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE LEGISLATURE ON AN ANNUAL
31 BASIS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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



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

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

38 (a) "Active shooter drill means an emergency
39 preparedness drill designed to teach students, teachers, school
40 personnel and staff how to respond in the event of an armed
41 intruder on campus or an armed assailant in the immediate vicinity
42 of the school, and which may not include any sensorial components,
43 activities or elements that mimic a real-life shooting. An active
44 shooter drill, including practice active shooter drills, is not an
45 active shooter simulation.

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

- 85 (a) Accessible;
- 86 (b) Developmentally appropriate and age-appropriate,
87 including appropriate safety verbiage and vocabulary;
- 88 (c) Culturally aware;
- 89 (d) Trauma-informed; and
- 90 (e) Including of accommodations for students with
91 mobility restrictions, sensory needs, developmental or physical
92 disabilities, mental health needs, and auditory or visual
93 limitations.

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

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

- 100 (a) Be provided to students before regular classroom
101 activity can be resumed; and
- 102 (b) Allow students to access mental health postvention
103 services available on campus, including, counselors, school
104 psychologists or social workers.

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



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

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

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

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

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



130 health needs, mobility restrictions, sensory needs, developmental
131 or physical disabilities and auditory or visual limitations.

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

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

141 (2) (a) No student in Grades K-12 shall be required to
142 participate in an active shooter simulation. No active shooter
143 simulation may take place during regular school hours if a
144 majority of students are present or expected to be present at the
145 school.

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

173 (a) Post the list publicly on the department's website;
174 and

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

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



179 **SECTION 8.** School districts and charter schools shall ensure
180 students have the opportunity to contribute to their school's
181 safety and violence-prevention planning. These opportunities
182 shall align with the recommendations of the Federal Emergency
183 Management Agency's multi-hazard planning for schools, including,
184 but not limited to:

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

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

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

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

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

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



204 guidelines for measuring the effectiveness of active shooter
205 drills. The guidelines shall:

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

209 (b) Provide parents, legal guardians, students,
210 staff and school-based mental health professionals the
211 right to review and comment on the active shooter drill
212 guidelines.

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

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

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

220 (c) The impact of active shooter drills, including
221 practice active shooter drills, on the mental health and wellness
222 of students and staff.

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



228 agencies and which ensures efficient responses to any emergency on
229 a school campus.

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

242 (2) The entity producing the data is responsible for
243 providing the data to the school district and local law
244 enforcement and public safety agencies for use in response to
245 emergencies.

246 (3) School mapping data must:

247 (a) Be provided in an electronic or a digital
248 format to assist first responders in responding to emergencies at
249 schools;

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



253 school for which the data is provided without:

254 (i) Requiring those agencies to purchase
255 additional software; or

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

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

259 (i) Requiring those agencies to purchase
260 additional software; or

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

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

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

268 (f) Be oriented true north;

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

271 (h) Contain site-specific labeling that matches the
272 structure of school buildings, including room labels, hallway
273 names, and external door or stairwell numbers and locations of
274 hazards, critical utility locations, key boxes, automated external
275 defibrillators and trauma kits;



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

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

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

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

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

297 (a) Monies appropriated by the Legislature for the
298 purposes of funding the School Emergency Response Mapping Data
299 Grant Program;

300 (b) The interest accruing to the fund;



301 (c) Any monies received from the federal government for
302 such purposes;

303 (d) Donations; and

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

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

308 37-11-5. (1) It shall be the duty of the principals and
309 teachers in all public school buildings to instruct the pupils in
310 the methods of fire drills and to practice fire drills until all
311 the pupils in the school are familiar with the methods of escape.
312 Such fire drills shall be conducted often enough to keep such
313 pupils well drilled. It shall be the further duty of such
314 principals and teachers to instruct the pupils in all programs of
315 emergency management as may be designated by the State Department
316 of Education.

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

321 **SECTION 14.** (1) There is created the Mississippi School
322 Safety Task Force for the purpose of the continual study of
323 ensuring and enhancing safe school environments for students,
324 teachers and staff in Mississippi, and the implementation of best
325 practices for prevention and response.



326 (2) The task force shall be composed of the following
327 twenty-five (25) members:

328 (a) The Commissioner of the Mississippi Department of
329 Public Safety, who shall serve as the Chairman;

330 (b) The Chairmen of the Education Committees of the
331 House of Representatives and Senate;

332 (c) The Chairmen of the Judiciary A Committees of the
333 House of Representatives and Senate;

334 (d) The State Superintendent of Public Education;

335 (e) The Executive Director of the Mississippi Emergency
336 Management Agency;

337 (f) The Executive Director of the Mississippi
338 Department of Mental Health;

339 (g) The Director of the Mississippi Office of Homeland
340 Security;

341 (h) The Director of the Mississippi Bureau of
342 Narcotics;

343 (i) The Director of the Mississippi Highway Patrol
344 (Assistant Commissioner of the Mississippi Department of Public
345 Safety);

346 (j) The Executive Director of the Mississippi Wireless
347 Communication Commission;

348 (k) The Director of the Office of Safe and Orderly
349 Schools within the State Department of Education;

350 (l) A representative from the Office of the Governor;



351 (m) The Attorney General;

352 (n) Four (4) law enforcement officers, one selected
353 from each Congressional district, and two (2) of whom shall be a
354 county sheriff, and two (2) of whom shall be a municipal police
355 chief, who shall be appointed by the Commissioner;

356 (o) A school superintendent, appointed by the Governor,
357 from the state-at-large;

358 (p) A representative of the Mississippi School Board
359 Association;

360 (q) A school resource officer, appointed by the
361 Governor, from the state-at-large;

362 (r) A student representative, appointed by the State
363 Superintendent of Public Education, from the state-at-large;

364 (s) A parent representative, appointed by the State
365 Superintendent of Public Education, from the state-at-large; and

366 (t) A representative of the Mississippi Association of
367 School Superintendents.

368 (3) The members of the task force shall be appointed within
369 thirty (30) days of the effective date of this act. Any vacancy
370 in the task force shall not affect its powers, but shall be filled
371 as prescribed in subsection (1) of this section. The task force
372 shall hold its first meeting within sixty (60) days of the
373 effective date of this act, on a call of the commissioner, as
374 chairman of the task force. A majority of the membership of the
375 task force shall constitute a quorum, and shall meet at the call



376 of the chairman. All members must be notified in writing of all
377 meetings at least five (5) days before the date on which a meeting
378 of the task force is scheduled.

379 (4) Members of the task force shall receive a per diem in
380 the amount provided in Section 25-3-69 for each day engaged in the
381 business of the task force. Members of the task force, other than
382 the legislative members, shall receive reimbursement for travel
383 expenses incurred while engaged in official business of the task
384 force in accordance with Section 25-3-41 and the legislative
385 members of the task force shall receive the expense allowance
386 provided for in Section 5-1-47.

387 (5) The task force shall report its findings and
388 recommendations to the Legislature annually not later than
389 December 1 each year.

390 **SECTION 15.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
391 and after July 1, 2024, and shall stand repealed on June 30, 2024.

