

State of Arkansas  
93rd General Assembly  
Regular Session, 2021

# A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1549

By: Representative Cozart  
By: Senator Irvin

## For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO AMEND VARIOUS PROVISIONS OF THE 2015 SCHOOL SAFETY ACT; TO ESTABLISH THE ARKANSAS CENTER FOR SCHOOL SAFETY OF THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE INSTITUTE ADVISORY BOARD; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

## Subtitle

TO AMEND VARIOUS PROVISIONS OF THE 2015 SCHOOL SAFETY ACT; AND TO ESTABLISH THE ARKANSAS CENTER FOR SCHOOL SAFETY OF THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE INSTITUTE ADVISORY BOARD.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code § 6-15-1302 is amended to read as follows:

6-15-1302. Emergency operation plans and ~~panic button alert system~~ emergency communication with law enforcement requirements.

(a) On or before ~~September 1, 2015,~~ October 1, 2021, a public school shall have a panic button alert system ~~if funding is available~~ or other means of emergency communication with law enforcement if funding is available.

(b) The panic button alert system shall:

(1) Connect the caller with 911 while simultaneously notifying designated on-site personnel;

(2)(A) Directly integrate into the existing statewide Smart911 system.

(B) The Smart911 system shall provide a way for a public



school to geo-fence the school campus and provide and manage floor plans and other documents to assist emergency responders when they automatically display during a 911 call;

(3) Be available for use as a smartphone application and have a mechanism for panic notifications to be triggered by non-smartphone wireless callers and landline callers; and

(4) Be limited to users designated, approved, and confirmed by school administrators.

SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 6-15-1303 is amended to read as follows:

6-15-1303. Safe Schools Initiative Act.

~~(a)(1) A school district shall develop a school safety plan and provide annual training for all of its employees and students, to the extent practicable, in preventing and responding to acts of violence, terrorism, natural disaster, and other emergencies, including without limitation:~~

~~(1) Tornado safety drills under § 6-10-121;~~

~~(2) Emergency plans and panic button alert systems under § 6-15-1302; and~~

~~(3)(A) Annual active shooter drills and school safety assessments in collaboration with local law enforcement and emergency management personnel for all schools, including a school lockdown exercise with panic button alert system training.~~

~~(B) The purpose of the training is to allow participants to:~~

~~(i) Discuss simulated emergency situations in a low-stress environment;~~

~~(ii) Clarify the roles and responsibilities of individuals and the logistics of handling an emergency on the school campus; and~~

~~(iii) Identify areas in which the school safety plan should be modified~~ A public school district or open-enrollment charter school shall conduct a comprehensive school safety audit every three (3) years to assess the safety, security, accessibility, and emergency preparedness of district buildings and grounds in collaboration with local law enforcement, fire, and emergency management officials.

(2)(A) A comprehensive school safety audit shall be conducted by

more than one (1) individual, including at least one (1) individual who is not assigned to the facility being audited, if the audit is conducted by district personnel.

(B) A comprehensive school safety audit shall include without limitation an audit of the following:

(i) Safety and security of the site and exterior of buildings;

(ii) Access control;

(iii) Safety and security of the interior of buildings;

(iv) Monitoring and surveillance, including without limitation type and extent;

(v) Communication and information security;

(vi) Review of emergency operation plans; and

(vii) School climate and culture.

(3) The initial comprehensive school safety audit shall be conducted by August 1, 2024.

(4) The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education shall promulgate rules specifying how the completion of the audit and confirmation of collaboration with local law enforcement and emergency management officials shall be verified.

(b)(1) A public school district or open-enrollment charter school shall conduct an annual lockdown drill for a possible threat on campus at each school in the public school district or open-enrollment charter school.

(2) As part of the public school district or open-enrollment charter school's planning for lockdown drills, the public school district or open-enrollment charter school shall:

(A) Assess the plan and ability of the public school district or open-enrollment charter school to prevent and respond to a threat on campus;

(B) Identify the roles and responsibilities of each individual when an emergency occurs;

(C) Discuss the logistics of responding to an emergency on the school campus;

(D) Identify areas in which the emergency operation plan of the school may require modification, if necessary; and

(E) Collaborate with local law enforcement and emergency management officials.

(3) The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education shall promulgate rules describing how the completion of the drills and confirmation of collaboration with local law enforcement and emergency management officials shall be verified.

~~(b)(1)(c)(1)~~ On or before ~~September 1, 2015,~~ October 1, 2021, a public school shall provide current floor plans and pertinent emergency contact information to be used in connection with the panic button alert system through the statewide Smart911 system appropriate first responders.

(2) Public school administration shall ~~update the~~ provide updated information ~~as necessary, including~~ annually and when substantial building modifications or changes are made.

(3) Information provided under this subsection is not a public record and is not available for public inspection.

(4) The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education shall promulgate rules describing how public school compliance with subdivisions (c)(1) and (2) of this section will be verified.

~~(e)(1)(d)(1)~~ ~~Subject to an appropriation and funding for this purpose, the Criminal Justice Institute shall provide the necessary training and education for:~~ Subject to continued appropriation and funding for this purpose, the Arkansas Center for School Safety of the Criminal Justice Institute shall assist the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education in building the capacity of educators, leaders, and law enforcement professionals to meet the safety needs of children in public schools in this state.

~~(A) Personnel designated by a school district or an education service cooperative concerning the active shooter drills required under this section through its Safe Schools Initiative; and~~

~~(B) Law enforcement officers, emergency management personnel, and other persons who will conduct the school safety assessments and active shooter drills on a school campus under this section.~~

(2) The Arkansas Center for School Safety of the Criminal Justice Institute shall promote and support school safety statewide and shall provide school safety training, education, and resources for school, district, and law enforcement personnel.

~~(2)(A)(3)(A) The Safe Schools Initiative training for school personnel shall be hosted by an education service cooperative of which the school district is a constituent~~ The Arkansas Center for School Safety of the Criminal Justice Institute shall be the state school safety clearinghouse and shall collaborate with the following entities to provide a comprehensive, efficient, and effective resource for education and law enforcement personnel to obtain training and technical assistance to meet the school safety needs of students in this state:

(i) The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education;

(ii) The Safe Schools Committee established under § 6-15-1301 et seq.;

(iii) The Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators;

(iv) The Arkansas Schools Boards Association;

(v) Education service cooperatives;

(vi) The Division of Emergency Management;

(vii) The Arkansas Public School Resource Center, Inc.; and

(viii) Other key stakeholders.

~~(B) The designated personnel who receive the Safe Schools Initiative training shall train other school employees and students~~ The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education shall collaborate actively with the Arkansas Center for School Safety of the Criminal Justice Institute and shall promote the training and resources provided by the Arkansas Center for School Safety of the Criminal Justice Institute to public school district or open-enrollment charter school staff.

~~(C) The Safe Schools Initiative training also provided by~~ the Arkansas Center for School Safety of the Criminal Justice Institute may include without limitation the training and education needed to assist a public school or private school in:

(i) Developing prevention strategies and enhancing existing ~~crisis management~~ emergency response plans for campus security and safety issues;

~~(ii) Delivering education to students and faculty on public~~ Addressing public safety and legal topics such as drugs and alcohol

abuse, sexual assault, dating violence, bullying and cyber-bullying, gangs, preventing the possession of weapons by minors, and responding to the threat of weapons at school;

(iii) ~~Preparing~~ Conducting school safety ~~assessments~~ audits; and

(iv) Cooperating effectively with law enforcement officers, school resource officers, and other school safety personnel, in the school setting; and

(v) Other relevant school safety topics, initiatives, and programs.

~~(3) The following agencies or persons may conduct a school safety assessment and active shooter drill for a school district after receiving training from the Criminal Justice Institute:~~

~~(A) The Arkansas Law Enforcement Training Academy;~~

~~(B) The Department of Arkansas State Police;~~

~~(C) The Arkansas Department of Emergency Management;~~

~~(D) The Black River Technical College Law Enforcement Training Academy; or~~

~~(E) Other persons or entities identified on the Criminal Justice Institute's website as having received the training.~~

(4) Annual training and ~~active shooter~~ emergency response drills may be conducted during the instructional day or during ~~non-instructional~~ noninstructional time periods as determined by the school district.

~~(d)~~(e) Subject to an appropriation and funding for this purpose, each public school, in collaboration with the school district, may install communications equipment that is interoperable with the Arkansas Wireless Information Network system.

SECTION 3. Arkansas Code Title 6, Chapter 15, Subchapter 13, is amended to add an additional section to read as follows:

6-15-1305. Advisory Board of the Arkansas Center for School Safety of the Criminal Justice Institute.

(a) There is established the Advisory Board of the Arkansas Center for School Safety of the Criminal Justice Institute.

(b)(1) The board shall include the following members:

(A) The Director of the Criminal Justice Institute;

(B) The Executive Director of the Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators or his or her designee;

(C) The Director of the Arkansas School Boards Association or his or her designee;

(D) The Director of the Division of Emergency Management or his or her designee;

(E) The Secretary of the Department of Education or his or her designee;

(F) The Director of the Division of Public School Academic Facilities and Transportation or his or her designee;

(G) The Director of the Arkansas Public School Resource Center or his or her designee;

(H) One (1) director of an educational service cooperative in this state;

(I) One (1) chief of police;

(J) One (1) county sheriff;

(K) One (1) school resource officer;

(L) One (1) school administrator;

(M) One (1) school teacher;

(N) One (1) school counselor;

(O) One (1) school-focused mental health professional; and

(P) One (1) citizen at-large.

(2)(A) The Governor shall appoint the members of the board for a three-year term unless otherwise specified.

(B) The term of a member of the board who serves by virtue of his or her office shall continue until the member vacates the office.

(C) Terms for initial appointments shall be staggered, to the extent possible, so that an equal number of members shall rotate each year.

SECTION 4. Arkansas Code § 6-17-708 is amended to read as follows:

6-17-708. ~~Teen~~ Mental health awareness and teen suicide awareness and prevention professional development.

(a)(1) The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education shall require two (2) hours of professional development, or professional learning credits as determined by the division, in mental health awareness and teen

suicide awareness and prevention for licensed public school personnel according to the professional development schedule under § 6-17-709.

(2) The professional development under this section may be accomplished through self-review of suitable mental health awareness and suicide prevention materials approved by the division.

(b) The professional development under this section shall count toward the satisfaction of requirements for professional development in the Standards for Accreditation of Arkansas Public Schools and School Districts and for licensure requirements for licensed personnel.

SECTION 5. Arkansas Code § 6-17-709(a)(3), concerning professional development schedules, is amended to read as follows:

(3) In the ~~2015-2016~~ 2023-2024 school year and every fourth school year thereafter, the mental health awareness and teen suicide awareness and prevention professional development required under § 6-17-708; and

SECTION 6. Arkansas Code § 6-18-2004, concerning comprehensive student services under the School Counseling Improvement Act of 2019, is amended to add an additional subsection to read as follows:

(d) By September 1, 2024, and every four (4) years following, a school counselor shall receive Youth Mental Health First Aid training to learn the risk factors and warning signs of mental health issues in adolescents, the importance of early intervention, and how to help an adolescent who is in crisis or expecting a mental health challenge.

SECTION 7. DO NOT CODIFY. Youth Mental Health First Aid training.

A school counselor who receives Youth Mental Health First Aid training before the effective date of Section 6 of this act shall have met the initial training requirement and the four-year timeframe for continued training shall be calculated from the date of the initial training received by the school counselor.

APPROVED: 4/8/21