**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND ARTICLE 9, CHAPTER 63, TITLE 59 OF THE 1976 CODE, RELATING TO SCHOOL SAFETY AND SECURITY DRILLS, BY ADDING SECTION 56-63-940, TO PROVIDE THAT EVERY PUBLIC SCHOOL IS REQUIRED TO PREPARE A SCHOOL SAFETY PLAN, TO INCLUDE PROVISIONS FOR THE PLAN, TO PROVIDE THAT THE PLAN MUST ADDRESS SECURITY ISSUES IN OR ON ANY REAL PROPERTY OWNED BY OR LEASED TO ANY PUBLIC SCHOOL, AND TO PROVIDE THAT THE SOUTH CAROLINA LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVISION MUST PROVIDE TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEMS THROUGHOUT THIS STATE IN THE AREA OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND SAFE SCHOOL OPERATIONS.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. Article 9, Chapter 63, Title 59 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 59-63-940. (A) Every public school shall prepare a school safety plan to respond effectively to violent incidents in schools and to provide a safe learning environment for the state’s children, teachers, and other school personnel. The plan shall also address preparedness for natural disasters, hazardous materials or radiological accidents, acts of violence, and acts of terrorism, including safety and security drills as prescribed by Section 59‑63‑910. The school safety plans shall be prepared with input from students enrolled in that school, the parents or legal guardians of students enrolled in that school, teachers in that school, community leaders, other school employees and school district employees, and local law enforcement, juvenile court, fire service, public safety, and emergency management agencies. As part of such plans, public schools shall provide for coordination with local law enforcement agencies and the local juvenile court system. School safety plans shall include, at a minimum, the following strategy areas:

(1) training school administrators, teachers, and support staff, including, but not limited to, school resource officers, security officers, secretaries, custodians, and bus drivers, on school violence prevention, school security, school threat assessment, mental health awareness, and school emergency planning best practices;

(2) evaluating and refining school security measures;

(3) updating and exercising school emergency preparedness plans;

(4) strengthening partnerships with public safety officials; and

(5) creating enhanced crisis communications plans and social media strategies.

(B) School safety plans prepared by public schools shall address security issues in or on any real property owned by or leased to any public school. School safety plans should also address security issues involving the transportation of pupils to and from school and school functions when such transportation is furnished by the school or school system and school functions are held during non‑instructional hours.

(C) The South Carolina Law Enforcement Division shall provide training and technical assistance to public school systems throughout this State in the area of emergency management and safe school operations. This training and technical assistance shall include, but is not limited to, crisis response team development, site surveys and safety audits, crisis management planning, exercise design, safe school planning, emergency operations planning, search and seizure, bomb threat management, and model school safety plans.

(D) The plans shall be submitted to the Department of Education and updated by each district triennially.

(E) School safety plans prepared pursuant to this chapter are exempt from the provisions of Chapter 4, Title 30.

(F) The Department of Education and the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division shall biennially provide the Governor and the General Assembly with recommendations regarding school safety, including any projected costs, recommended statutory changes, infrastructure needs, personnel needs, and any flexibility recommended to be granted to school districts to use available funds for school safety and improvement needs.

(G) The Department of Education shall collaborate with the State Law Enforcement Division and the Department of Mental Health to create a state-level threat assessment team. The threat assessment team is responsible for identifying, evaluating, and addressing threats or potential threats to school security. The threat assessment team shall assist each school district in the development of an annual comprehensive threat assessment report. By August 15, 2019, each school in the State must identify key personnel to serve on the school’s threat assessment team. These teams shall provide regular input to the state-level threat assessment team so that new threats or potential threats are addressed statewide and in a timely manner.

(H) A school district may request funding assistance from the state for school safety and improvement needs, including, but not limited to, video surveillance cameras, metal detectors, alarms, communications systems, building access controls, and other similar security devices. The Department of Education and the State Law Enforcement Division shall assist the General Assembly in establishing criteria that will be applied in reviewing and granting funding requests pursuant to this subsection.”

SECTION 2. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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