



SOUTH CAROLINA REVENUE AND FISCAL AFFAIRS OFFICE

STATEMENT OF ESTIMATED FISCAL IMPACT

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This fiscal impact statement is produced in compliance with the South Carolina Code of Laws and House and Senate rules. The focus of the analysis is on governmental expenditure and revenue impacts and may not provide a comprehensive summary of the legislation.

Bill Number: H. 3258 Introduced on January 14, 2025
Subject: Mobile Panic Alert Systems in Public Schools
Requestor: House Education and Public Works
RFA Analyst(s): Wren
Impact Date: March 19, 2025

Fiscal Impact Summary

This bill requires each public school district and charter school to acquire and implement a mobile panic alert system in each school before July 1, 2026. The S.C. Department of Education (SCDE), in consultation with the State Law Enforcement Division (SLED) and the Department of Public Safety (DPS), must provide a list of vendors that satisfy the requirements of the panic alert system to schools by January 1, 2026, and must provide mandatory annual training to all public school resource officers and public school personnel on the proper use of the panic button alert system. Further, the State Board of Education must promulgate regulations to implement the provisions of the bill.

This bill will increase recurring expenses of SCDE by approximately \$272,600 beginning in FY 2025-26. Of this amount, \$240,000 is recurring for 2.0 FTEs to manage the new responsibilities imposed by the bill and \$32,000 is recurring for miscellaneous operating expenses. The agency expects equipment costs to total \$600 every three years.

The expenditure impact of this bill on the state agency schools is undetermined. The Governor's School for Agriculture at John de la Howe indicates that the expenditure impact of the bill is undetermined and will depend on the cost of the panic alert system. The Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School and the Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities anticipate being able to manage any expenses with existing appropriations. The Governor's School for Science and Mathematics reports that the school currently has an existing contact for emergency communications that has mobile panic alert functionality and is accessible to any user with a mobile device. The agency further indicates that the bill will have no expenditure impact if the existing system meets the requirements of the bill. However, if the current system does not meet the requirements, the agency anticipates that the bill could increase expenses by \$15,000. Of this amount, \$10,000 is nonrecurring for the implementation of the system, and \$5,000 is recurring to maintain the required software.

This bill will have no expenditure impact on SLED since any increase in workload can be managed with existing staff and resources.

DPS does not anticipate that the bill will have an expenditure impact on the agency. DPS further indicates that their interpretation of the bill is that they will need to consult with SCDE and

SLED to identify vendors and to provide training but will not be responsible for the costs associated with the training.

The expenditure impact of this bill on local school districts will vary depending on the type of system chosen by SCDE and the size of the district. SCDE surveyed the seventy-two regular public school districts and the three charter school districts regarding the expenditure impact of this bill and received responses from eighteen districts. For reference, the district responses are as follows. Three districts indicate the cost of mobile panic alert system is unknown and depends on the type of system chosen by SCDE. Three districts indicate that they have an existing system in place but is not sure if the existing systems will meet the requirements of the bill. These three districts indicate that initial costs ranged from \$52,000 to \$325,000. The remaining twelve districts indicate that implementation of the bill could increase expenses by a range of \$90,000 to \$10 million per district. There will also be annual maintenance costs. Actual costs will depend on the system chosen by SCDE and the number of schools per district.

Explanation of Fiscal Impact

Introduced on January 14, 2025

State Expenditure

This bill requires each public school district and charter school to acquire and implement a mobile panic alert system in each school before July 1, 2026. SCDE, in consultation with SLED and DPS, must provide a list of vendors that satisfy the requirements of the panic alert system to schools by January 1, 2026, and must provide mandatory annual training to all public school resource officers and public school personnel on the proper use of the panic button alert system. Further, the State Board of Education, through SCDE must promulgate regulations to implement the provisions of the bill.

S.C. Department of Education. SCDE indicates that this bill will increase expenses of the department by approximately \$272,600 beginning in FY 2025-26. Of this amount, \$240,000 is recurring for 2.0 FTEs to manage the new responsibilities imposed by the bill and \$32,000 is recurring for miscellaneous operating expenses. The agency expects equipment costs to total \$600 every three years.

State Agency Schools. The Governor's School for Agriculture at John de la Howe indicates that the expenditure impact of the bill is undetermined and will depend on the cost of the panic alert system. The Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School and the Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities anticipate being able to manage any expenses with existing appropriations. The Governor's School for Science and Mathematics reports that the school currently has an existing contact for emergency communications that has mobile panic alert functionality and is accessible to any user with a mobile device. The agency further indicates that the bill will have no expenditure impact if the existing system meets the requirements of the bill. However, if the current system does not meet the requirements, the agency anticipates that the bill could increase expenses by \$15,000. Of this amount, \$10,000 is nonrecurring for the implementation of the system, and \$5,000 is recurring to maintain the required software. Therefore, the expenditure impact on the state agency schools is undetermined.

State Law Enforcement Division. SLED indicates that any increase in workload can be managed with existing staff and resources. Therefore, the bill will have no expenditure impact on SLED.

Department of Public Safety. DPS indicates that their interpretation of the bill is that they will need to consult with SCDE and SLED to identify vendors and to provide training but will not be responsible for the costs associated with the training. Therefore, the bill will have no expenditure impact on DPS.

State Revenue

N/A

Local Expenditure

This bill requires each public school district and charter school to acquire and implement a mobile panic alert system in each school before July 1, 2026. SCDE, in consultation with SLED and DPS, must provide a list of vendors that satisfy the requirements of the panic alert system to schools by January 1, 2026, and must provide mandatory annual training to all public school resource officers and public school personnel on the proper use of the panic button alert system.

SCDE surveyed the seventy-two regular public school districts and the three charter school districts regarding the expenditure impact of this bill and received responses from eighteen districts. Three districts indicate the cost of mobile panic alert system is unknown and depends on the type of system chosen by SCDE. Three districts indicate that they have an existing system in place but is not sure if the existing systems will meet the requirements of the bill. These three districts indicate that initial costs ranged from \$52,000 to \$325,000. The remaining twelve districts indicate that implementation of the bill could increase expenses by a range of \$90,000 to \$10 million per district. There will also be annual maintenance costs. Actual costs will depend on the system chosen by SCDE and the number of schools per district.

Local Revenue

N/A



Frank A. Rainwater, Executive Director