



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. 5201	Introduced on February 18, 2026
Subject:	Safe Schools Act of 2026	
Requestor:	House Education and Public Works	
RFA Analyst(s):	Wren	
Impact Date:	April 20, 2026	

Fiscal Impact Summary

This bill establishes the Multijurisdictional School Safety Task Force (MSSTF) to develop, coordinate, and advise on statewide school safety policies, best practices, and implementation strategies. The bill specifies that the State Law Enforcement Division (SLED) must provide administrative support and staffing for the MSSTF. The bill also requires the MSSTF to develop a statewide master Multihazard Emergency Operation Plan (MEOP) to provide templates, protocols, best practices, and technical support to districts and schools. Each school district must develop and annually update district-wide and school-specific MEOPs aligned with the statewide master MEOP. Additionally, the bill requires each school district to conduct specific in-person, live-action safety drills each academic year. The bill also adds new responsibilities for the South Carolina Center for School Safety and Targeted Violence (Center) under SLED.

This bill will increase SLED's annual expenses by approximately \$1,741,000 in FY 2026-27, including \$1,115,000 in recurring expenses and \$626,000 in non-recurring expenses. Recurring expenses include \$923,000 for salary, fringe, and overtime for 8.0 FTEs (5 Special Agent III positions, 2 Administrator Coordinator positions, and 1 Lieutenant position) to manage the new responsibilities imposed by the bill and \$192,000 for gasoline, technology licenses, training and travel, and other miscellaneous operating expenses. Nonrecurring expenses are expected to total \$626,000 for vehicles, computer equipment, uniforms and protective gear, and miscellaneous equipment for officers. The agency will request additional General Fund appropriations for these expenses. SLED further notes that the requirements of the bill may result in additional personnel and operating expenses upon a more comprehensive review of the bill.

The Adjutant General's Office anticipates that the South Carolina Emergency Management Division's (SCEMD) involvement in the development of the new plans and drills required by the bill will extend beyond the scope of having one SCEMD employee as a representative on the MSSTF as required by the bill. The agency anticipates working closely with SLED, law enforcement, and SCDE to develop a statewide master MEOP that must consider different student ages and needs. The agency also anticipates that it will need to provide direct technical support to districts and schools. Based on these assumptions, the agency expects expenses to increase by \$116,000. Of this amount, \$112,000 is for salary and fringe for 1.5 FTEs. These positions will be responsible for leading the development, implementation, and evaluation of school safety programs; coordinating training and emergency preparedness activities with school administrators, law enforcement, and emergency management partners; maintaining compliance

with state and federal safety requirements, reporting standards, and documentation; and serving as the primary liaison between the MSSTF, SLED, SCEMD, and school districts in order to ensure continuity of operations, rapid response to issues, and alignment with statewide safety priorities. The remaining \$4,000 is for travel and per diem. The agency will request additional General Fund appropriations for these expenses.

The Adjutant General's Office further notes that if the intent of the bill is for SCEMD to be involved in the in-person, live action safety drills pursuant to Section 59-63-650, the agency may need an additional 2.0 FTEs (Program Coordinator II) to support school districts with the required drills. Salary and fringe for the 2.0 FTEs, if needed, is expected to total approximately \$149,000, and travel expenses are expected to total \$6,000 annually.

This bill will have no expenditure impact on the Governor's Office or the S.C. Department of Education (SCDE) as these agencies can accomplish the new responsibilities with existing staff and resources.

This bill is not expected to have an expenditure impact on the state agency schools. The Governor's School for Science and Mathematics, the Governor's School for Agriculture at John de la Howe, and the Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School report that the new responsibilities imposed by the bill can be managed with existing appropriations. Based upon these responses, Revenue and Fiscal Affairs (RFA) anticipates that any expenses associated with the bill for the Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities and the School for the Deaf and Blind can also be managed within existing appropriations.

SCDE surveyed the seventy-two regular school districts and the three charter school districts and received a response from sixteen districts. Eight of the responding districts indicate that the bill will have no expenditure impact or that any expenses can be managed within existing budgets. Five districts indicate that the bill will increase expenses by an unknown amount for the required certified security and campus assessments and additional personnel to develop, update, and maintain the new responsibilities in the bill. The remaining three responding districts indicate that expenses could increase by an amount ranging from \$7,000 to \$3.8 million every three years for costs associated with the certified security and safety campus assessment requirement but further indicate that the exact amount will depend upon whether district security personnel will be allowed to conduct the assessments or if an external certified security assessor will need to be utilized.

For noncompliance with the provisions of the bill, SLED, in consultation with the MSSTF, may withhold a portion of applicable state school safety or related funds from SCDE for redistribution to compliant districts. Therefore, the bill may impact revenue distributed to the state agency schools and local school districts if they do not comply with the new requirements.

Explanation of Fiscal Impact

Introduced on February 18, 2026

State Expenditure

This bill establishes the MSSTF to develop, coordinate, and advise on statewide school safety policies, best practices, and implementation strategies. The MSSTF consists of seven members as follows: one representative from SLED, one representative of SCDE, one representative of the SCEMD, one representative of local law enforcement, one school safety officer or school resource officer, one licensed mental health professional with experience in child or adolescent mental health, and one public school district administrator. Members will serve without compensation, but may receive mileage, subsistence, and per diem as provided by law, subject to available funds. The MSSTF must submit a written report at least annually to the Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the President of the Senate. The report must be posted on SCDE's website. The bill specifies that SLED must provide administrative support and staffing for the MSSTF. The bill further provides that the Center, within SLED, must maintain a public registry of approved certified security assessors, establish and enforce minimum credential and training standards, and review all submitted assessment reports for compliance.

The bill also requires the MSSTF to develop a statewide master MEOP to provide templates, protocols, best practices, and technical support to districts and schools. The MSSTF must also review and assess school safety policies, procedures, and practices; identify coordination gaps and recommend best practices for prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery; and advise the General Assembly and executive agencies on school safety matters.

Additionally, the bill requires each school district to develop and annually update district-wide and school-specific MEOPs aligned with the statewide master MEOP, which must be audited by the Center at least every two years. The bill also requires every public school and charter school to undergo an in-person certified security and safety campus assessment at least once every three years. Assessments must be conducted by a certified security assessor registered with the Center. Further, the bill requires each school district to conduct in-person, live-action safety drills for the majority of the required drills pursuant to Article 9, Chapter 63, Title 59 or as provided in this bill each academic year. For noncompliance with any requirement of this bill, SLED, in consultation with the MSSTF, may withhold a portion of applicable state school safety or related funds from SCDE for redistribution to compliant districts; include the district or school in an annual public noncompliance report; and require submission of a corrective action plan within thirty days.

The bill further requires SLED and the Center to provide technical assistance, training, and resources to support districts in achieving and maintaining compliance.

State Law Enforcement Division. SLED indicates that this bill will increase the agency's expenses by at least \$1,741,000 in FY 2026-27. Of this amount, \$883,000, including salary and fringe, is recurring for 8.0 FTEs (5 Special Agent III positions, 2 Administrator Coordinator positions, and 1 Lieutenant position) to manage the provisions of the bill. Recurring expenses for overtime for the special agents are expected to total \$40,000. Additional recurring expenses are

expected to total approximately \$192,000 for gasoline, technology licenses, training and travel, and other miscellaneous operating expenses. Nonrecurring expenses are expected total \$626,000 for vehicles, computer equipment, uniforms and protective gear, and miscellaneous equipment for officers. Expenses will decrease to at least \$1,116,000 beginning in FY 2027-28. The agency will request additional General Fund appropriations for these expenses. SLED further notes that the requirements of the bill may result in additional personnel and operating expenses upon a more comprehensive review of the bill.

Adjutant General's Office. The Adjutant General's Office anticipates that SCEMD's involvement will extend beyond the scope of having one SCEMD employee as a representative on the MSSTF. The agency anticipates working closely with SLED, law enforcement, and SCDE to develop a statewide master MEOP that must consider different student ages and individual student needs. The agency also anticipates that it will need to provide direct technical support to districts and schools. Therefore, the agency expects expenses to increase by \$116,000. Of this amount, \$112,000 is for salary and fringe for 1.5 FTEs, which will be responsible for leading the development, implementation, and evaluation of school safety programs; coordinating training and emergency preparedness activities with school administrators, law enforcement, and emergency management partners; maintaining compliance with state and federal safety requirements, reporting standards, and documentation; and serving as the primary liaison between the MSSTF, SLED, SCEMD, and school districts in order to ensure continuity of operations, rapid response to issues, and alignment with statewide safety priorities. The remaining \$4,000 is for travel and per diem. The agency will request additional General Fund appropriations for these expenses.

The Adjutant General's Office further notes that if the intent of the bill is for SCEMD to be involved in the in-person, live action safety drills pursuant to Section 59-63-650, the agency may need an additional 2.0 FTEs (Program Coordinator II) to support school districts with the required drills. Salary and fringe for the 2.0 FTEs, if needed, is expected to total approximately \$149,000, and travel expenses are expected to total \$6,000 annually.

Governor's Office. The Governor's Office indicates that it can manage the appointment of five individuals to the MSSTF with existing staff and appropriations. Therefore, the bill will have no expenditure impact on the Governor's Office.

S.C. Department of Education. SCDE indicates that serving on the MSSTF will have no impact on the agency as this can be accomplished with existing staff and resources.

State Agency Schools. The Governor's School for Science and Mathematics, the Governor's School for Agriculture at John de la Howe, and the Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School report that the new responsibilities imposed by the bill can be managed with existing appropriations. Based upon these responses, RFA anticipates that any expenses associated with the bill for the Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities and the School for the Deaf and Blind can also be managed within existing appropriations.

State Revenue

This bill specifies that for noncompliance with any requirement of the bill, SLED, in consultation with the MSSTF, may withhold a portion of applicable state school safety or related funds from SCDE for redistribution to compliant districts. Therefore, the bill may impact revenues of the state agency schools if any do not comply with the new requirements.

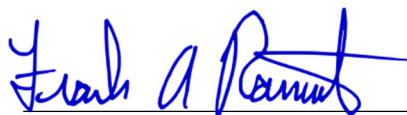
Local Expenditure

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SCDE surveyed the seventy-two regular school districts and the three charter school districts and received a response from sixteen districts. Eight of the responding districts indicate that the bill will have no expenditure impact or that any expenses can be managed within existing budgets. Five districts indicate that the bill will increase expenses by an unknown amount for the required certified security and campus assessments and additional personnel to develop, update, and maintain the new responsibilities in the bill. The remaining three responding districts indicate that expenses could increase by an amount ranging from \$7,000 to \$3.8 million every three years for costs associated with the certified security and safety campus assessment requirement but further indicate that the exact amount will depend upon whether district security personnel will be allowed to conduct the assessments or if an external certified security assessor will need to be utilized.

Local Revenue

This bill may impact school district revenues because the bill specifies SLED, in consultation with the MSSTF, may withhold a portion of applicable state school safety or related funds from SCDE for redistribution to compliant districts for noncompliance with any requirements of the bill.



Frank A. Rainwater, Executive Director