

O.C.G.A. Section 20-2-1185

School safety plans; drills

(a) Every public school shall prepare a school safety plan to help curb the growing incidence of violence in schools, to respond effectively to such incidents, and to provide a safe learning environment for Georgia's children, teachers, and other school personnel. Such plan shall also address preparedness for natural disasters, hazardous materials or radiological accidents, acts of violence, and acts of terrorism. School safety plans of public schools shall be prepared with input from students enrolled in that school, parents or legal guardians of such students, 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 the 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.

School safety plans of private schools may be prepared with input from students enrolled in that school, parents or legal guardians of such students, teachers in that school, other school employees, and local law enforcement, fire service, public safety, and emergency management agencies. Such plans shall be reviewed and, if necessary, updated annually. Such plans of public schools shall be submitted to the local emergency management agency and the local law enforcement agency for approval.

(b) A public school may request funding assistance from the state for facilities, technology, or other safety improvements or initiatives, such as the installation of safety equipment, 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 shall establish criteria that will be applied in reviewing funding requests pursuant to this subsection which shall take into consideration the physical security needs of the public school in evaluating how the school safety plan and funding request will support such physical security needs.

Funding may be provided to a public school in accordance with a school safety plan prepared by the school and approved by the local board of education, the local law enforcement agency, the Department of Education, and the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency; provided, however, that a public school shall be required to match the state funding with local funds unless the school can demonstrate a substantial hardship.

(c) School safety plans prepared by public schools shall address security issues in school safety zones as defined in Code Section 16-11-127.1. 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 held during noninstructional hours.

(d) The Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency shall provide training and technical assistance to public school systems, and may provide this same training and technical assistance to private school systems and independent private schools throughout this state in the area of emergency management and safe school operations. This training and technical assistance shall include, but not be 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.

(e) Every public school shall conduct drills with students, teachers, and other school personnel on the execution of school safety plans in such form and at such intervals based upon guidance from the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency.

History

Code 1981, Section **20-2-1185**, enacted by Ga. L. 1994, p. 1012, Section 3; Ga. L. 1999, p. 379, Section 1; Ga. L. 2014, p. 432, Section 2-12/HB 826; Ga. L. 2014, p. 599, Section 3-5/HB 60; Ga. L. 2016, p. 91, Section 3/SB 416; Ga. L. 2018, p. 753, Section 2/HB 763.