

**GEORGIA
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION SCHOOL
SAFETY AND CLIMATE
STRATEGIC PLAN
2020-2025**



**OFFICE OF SCHOOL SAFETY AND CLIMATE
Georgia Department of Education**



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INTRODUCTION

Schools around the nation face unprecedented challenges regarding threats to the safety of students, school personnel, schools, and the surrounding communities. Schools must be prepared for both internal and external threats – manmade, environmental, and situational, and they must understand the link between school climate and school safety. All safe school plans and execution of the plans must be done effectively and thoughtfully, and each school should implement a framework for improving school climate. The consequences for schools, students, and school personnel from a poorly developed safety plan and a negative school climate can be serious. The good news is the ample evidence and examples of how comprehensive school safety planning and positive school climates can save lives and property and thwart attacks on the safety and security of schools.

The focus on school violence sometimes diverts attention away from other possible threats and actions that are dangerous to schools. According to the CDC's School Associated Violent Death Study, barely "one percent of all violent-related deaths of school-age children happen on school grounds or on the way to and from school or during a school event away from school."¹ Therefore, schools need to be prepared for all types of circumstances and possible threats such as fires, tornadoes, public health crisis, and other crisis. An example of the other threats to the safety of schools is fires in schools. According to the United States Fire Administration, there are on average over 4,000 school fires each year that result in 75-90 injuries to students or school personnel and cause over \$66 million in property loss.² Despite the danger of fires, only about 66 percent of schools have smoke alarms or established fire response protocols, and only 50 percent record fire drills.³ Another example of threats to schools is tornadoes, which cause an average of 70 fatalities and over 1,500 injuries each year in the United States, according to the National Weather Service.

Another essential component of school safety is the role of school personnel, which must be specified in each school. Safe school plans should include specific roles of staff members, how the plan will unfold or become operational, how the plan can be adjusted during the event to be more effective, and how to organize a debriefing after the event to learn what needs to be changed in the plan.

The Georgia Department of Education provides guidance, training, and support to all school districts regarding school climate and school safety and security planning, prevention, protection, response, and recovery in partnership with other state and local agencies.

¹ "Characteristics of School-Associated Youth Homicides-United States, 1994-2018," *MMWR-CDC*, January 25, 2019, 53-60.

² "School Building Fires (2009-2011)", *Topical Fire Report Series*, Volume 14, Issue 14, April 2014.

³ *Ibid.*

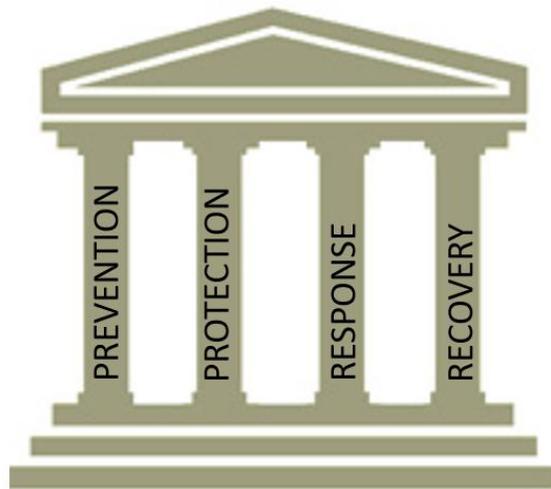
OFFICE OF SCHOOL SAFETY AND CLIMATE

MISSION STATEMENT

The Georgia Department of Education is committed to providing a **safe, secure, and productive** learning and working climate for all students and school personnel in all schools through the development and implementation of intervention and prevention programs and by providing technical assistance, training, and support to local school districts and local schools in collaboration with other state agencies and stakeholders.

MISSION AREAS

- **Prevention** – Actions to avoid incidents or to intervene appropriately or stop an incident from occurring and reoccurring that impact school safety and school climate
- **Protection** – Actions to reduce the vulnerabilities of schools and resources in order to deter, mitigate, or neutralize threats against school safety and school climate
- **Response** – Actions that provide support for schools in response to any type of incident that significantly disrupts the school safety and/or operations and school climate
- **Recovery** – Actions that assists schools in the recovery phase following an incident that jeopardized the security and safety of schools and its students and school personnel and compromised school climate



VISION

Safe, healthy, and secure schools for all students and school personnel at all times and in all situations.

FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENTS

- Leadership
- High quality service and support
- High quality training and follow-up technical assistance
- Technology support and integration
- Fiscal responsibility and efficiency
- Collaboration: communication, cooperation, coordination, and convergence

CORE VALUES

- Utilize multiple methods of communications
- Provide ongoing service, support, guidance, and technical assistance
- Expect high levels of professionalism, accountability, and integrity
- Encourage innovation and creativity
- Focus on solutions-based, solutions-driven problem-solving to highlight execution of strategies
- Create and sustain a positive workplace climate
- Emphasize research-based strategies and best practices that align with those of other state agencies
- Focus on the needs of students, school personnel, community, and other stakeholders

Strategy Implementation Model



STRATEGIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

GOAL 1: Create and maintain a collaborative climate for safe, supportive, and healthy schools

Objective 1.1 – Develop a seamless and aligned collaborative with the Georgia Emergency Management Agency/Homeland Security, Georgia Department of Public Health, Georgia Department of Agriculture, Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, Georgia Department of Public Safety, and Georgia Office of Insurance and Safety Fire Commissioner.

Objective 1.2 - Increase the number of schools with a safe, healthy, and positive learning climate using the results of the Georgia Student Health Survey and School Climate Rating for accountability

Objective 1.3 – Expand and improve Georgia Insights School Climate Rating Dashboard

Objective 1.4 - Expand state/local infrastructure to lead and support tiered PBIS implementation and other methods to improve school climate

Objective 1.5 - Increase the number of schools implementing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) at the Operational or Distinguished Level (fidelity)

Objective 1.6 - Increase PBIS implementation fidelity and sustainability through ongoing professional learning and personnel readiness

Objective 1.7 - Expand the capacity of district personnel and Regional Education Service Agencies (RESA) School Climate Specialists to provide coaching and supports to districts and schools to create positive and safe school climates

Objective 1.8 – Broaden School Climate Specialists’ skills to provide technical assistance to schools to improve the behavioral health of students

Objective 1.9 - Work with non-PBIS schools on methods and strategies to improve school climate

Objective 1.10 - Link safe, secure, and nurturing learning environments with Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

Objective 1.11 - Expand resources and training for Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 interventions through PBIS and MTSS

Objective 1.12 - Broaden communications with collaborative partners to enhance school and community safety and health by participating in healthy schools and healthy communities' initiatives

Objective 1.13 - Strengthen partnerships with RESAs, school districts, and nonprofits to support and enhance school climate and safety efforts through training, onsite school risk assessments, and reviews of Safe School Plans

Objective 1.14 - Expand school climate professional learning opportunities for school district personnel, school personnel, and others

Objective 1.15 – Work with the Georgia Department of Public Health and the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities to reduce alcohol use, substance use, and tobacco use among students

Objective 1.16 – Support the Georgia Department of Public Health's efforts to reduce the prevalence and impact of asthma among students

Objective 1.17 – Work with the Georgia Department of Public Health on a statewide pandemic plan and recovery that includes schools, school districts, and communities

Objective 1.18 – Work with the Georgia Department of Agriculture on food security issues and initiatives

Objective 1.19 – Work with the Georgia Department of Agriculture to develop a protocol when local school system fuel supplies are in jeopardy due to emergency situations

Objective 1.20 – Work with the Georgia Department of Transportation and Georgia Department of Public Safety to share data and training opportunities for bus drivers

Objective 1.21 – Work with the Georgia Office of Insurance and Safety Fire Commissioner on the procedures for conducting and reporting weather drills, fire drills, and emergency drills.

Objective 1.22 – Work with the Child Welfare Collaborative to provide child abuse and neglect awareness training for educators.

GOAL 2: Develop a comprehensive and collaborative approach to safety and security that focuses on support and technical assistance

Objective 2.1 - Develop a School Safety Resource Center webpage as a central location for safety, security, and school climate resources for schools and school districts in collaboration with the Georgia Emergency Management Agency/Homeland Security (GEMA) and the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council

Objective 2.2 - Partner with GEMA to develop a standard Safe School Plan template that includes Continuity of Operations (COOP) guidance and a companion crisis planning resource guide

Objective 2.3 - Ensure that each school has a Safe School Plan

Objective 2.4 - Assist schools in the development of Safe School Plans as needed

Objective 2.5 - Review Safe School Plans as requested

Objective 2.6 - Conduct local school site safety assessments and provide written feedback to schools to strengthen the Safe School Plan and crisis preparations

Objective 2.7 - Assist schools in the utilization of data review methods to analyze Georgia Student Health Survey results to help determine student identified areas of safety, security, school climate, and behavioral health needs

Objective 2.8 - Develop a dashboard for school districts to allow them to analyze the Georgia Student Health Survey results compared to other school districts and the state

Objective 2.9 - Broaden partnerships with advocacy organizations to enhance school and community safety and school climate (e.g. Georgia Appleseed Law and Justice Center; The Carter Center; Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, etc.)

Objective 2.10 - Identify all elements (e.g. water, air quality, food security, etc.) that may compromise the health and safety of students and school personnel by working with other state agencies and collaborative partners (e.g. Georgia Water Coalition; Georgia Department of Agriculture; Georgia Environmental Protection Agency; GEMA; Office of Insurance and Safety Fire Commissioner; Georgia Public Health; Georgia Department of Transportation)

Objective 2.11 - Develop Statewide School Safety Advisory Committee

GOAL 3: Develop statewide emergency communications ability within the Georgia Department of Education

Objective 3.1 - Increase communications to school districts on matters related to school safety, security, and school climate and provide clear and transparent information to other stakeholders

Objective 3.2 – Link the Georgia Department of Education and Georgia Public Safety School Safety Hotline to the Georgia Information Sharing and Analysis Center (GISAC)

Objective 3.3 - Develop the Georgia Department of Education’s capability to send emergency communications to local school districts and schools in coordination with GEMA

Objective 3.4 - Evaluate current school safety and security technology use and determine opportunities for expanding existing and adapting new technologies

Objective 3.5 – Join other state agencies at the GEMA State Emergency Operations Center (EOC) during emergency situations, training, and/or simulations

Objective 3.6 – Establish an online connection with the State’s Web-EOC that monitors real-time unfolding events during an emergency

GOAL 4: Provide professional safety and security training to local school personnel, central office personnel, and others

Objective 4.1 - Support and provide training for school districts in multiple areas related to school safety to enhance their ability to advise school personnel on best practices

Objective 4.2 - Provide ongoing mental health awareness training for school personnel through the RESAs

Objective 4.3 – Work with the National Alliance on Mental Illness to develop Signals training that addresses early childhood mental health awareness

Objective 4.4 - Provide professional development on classroom management, teacher-student relationship and engagement building, verbal de-escalation, attribution, trauma, school safety procedures and practices, and school climate

Objective 4.5 - Expand suicide awareness and prevention training for school personnel

Objective 4.6. – Expand Crisis Intervention and Prevention training for school resource officers

Objective 4.7 - Provide training/information to school districts about food security in conjunction with the Georgia Department of Agriculture

Objective 4.8 – Work with GEMA to sponsor an annual school safety conference for educators, SROs, school support personnel, and other stakeholders

GOAL 5: Provide guidance to assist local schools and school systems in the use of technology and the design, planning, and maintenance of school buildings to enhance school safety

Objective 5.1 - Review models designed to provide technology-enhanced security systems (e.g. surveillance cameras, security alarms, etc.)

Objective 5.2 - Monitor electronic systems for tracking school safety equipment improvement requests

Objective 5.3 - Continuously improve infrastructure, monitoring, backup, and security systems that allow collection of data for tracking school safety and student discipline issues

Objective 5.4 - Improve training of schools through the development of online training modules related to school safety, PBIS/school climate, and updated security technologies

Objective 5.5 – Develop and provide guidance for new school construction and/or remodeling that focuses on safety features and possible impediments to safe designs

Objective 5.6 – Inform school systems about Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) and provide CPTED training

Objective 5.7 – Inform school districts about potential health hazards that can be avoided through proper and timely school maintenance and repairs

Objective 5.8 – Provide on-going school bus driver training and inform school districts of state requirements regarding school bus drivers, safety, and license

GOAL 6: Provide training and support to local schools and school systems to address risk factors and risk behaviors that impact student safety and well-being

Objective 6.1 – Collaborate with agencies and partner organizations to facilitate upstream prevention training for schools to include Sources of Strength

Objective 6.2 - Develop and expand regional and online training to ensure inclusion of student safety, behavioral health, PBIS/school climate, and student well-being into formal school safety planning

Objective 6.3 - Provide training in the use of Georgia Student Health Survey results to identify areas of need and inform effective prevention and intervention strategies and evaluations

Objective 6.4 – Consistently communicate ongoing and innovative state and national efforts and opportunities to support student safety, PBIS/school climate, and student well-being

Objective 6.5 – Train RESA-based School Climate Specialists on student risks and safety factors to enhance their ability to provide technical assistance to school districts and schools

Objective 6.6 – Train RESA-based School Climate Specialists on crisis planning to augment Safe School Plan development

Office of School Safety and Climate

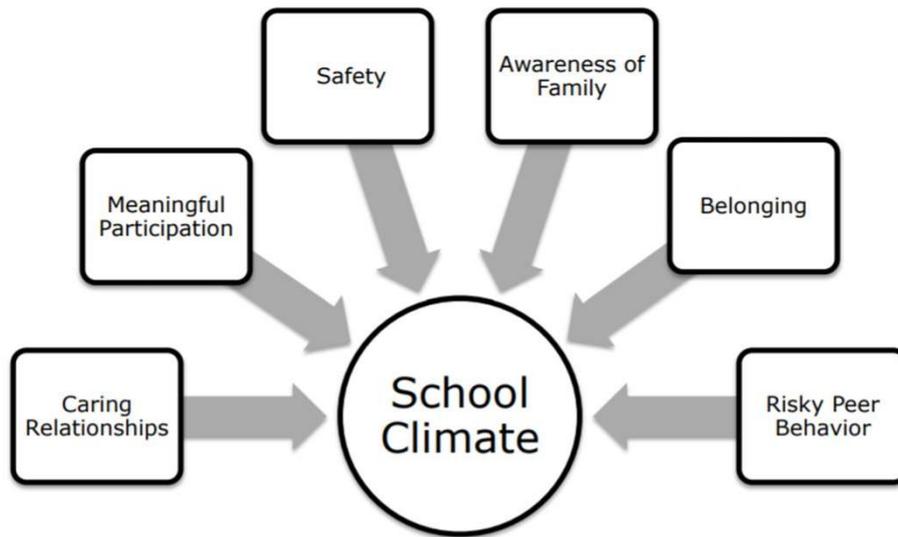


Advisory Committee

- Roy Brooks, Baker County Superintendent
- Curtis Jones, Bibb County Superintendent
- Fred Williams, Dublin City Superintendent
- Michelle Taylor, Calhoun City Schools Superintendent
- Rob Brown, Lumpkin County Superintendent
- Hayward Cordy, Oconee RESA Executive Director and President of PAGE
- Keith Everson, Northeast RESA Executive Director
- Tim Helms, Southwest RESA Executive Director
- Leigh Ann Putman, Metro-RESA Executive Director
- Paul Hildreth, Safety Director, Fulton County School System
- Sam Kitchens, Executive Director of Capital Programs, Bibb County School System
- Tracey Pendley, Atlanta Public Schools Teacher and Georgia Teacher of the Year
- Dan Lane, Fayette County School System Principal
- Rod Ellis, Glynn County School System Chief of Police and President of School Police Chiefs Association
- Michael Ruple, Paulding County School System Director of School Safety
- Gary Kelley, Georgia Department of Agriculture Inspector General
- Diane Durrence, Georgia Department of Public Health Deputy Chief Nurse School Health
- Lisa Morrison, Glynn County School System Lead Nurse and President of Georgia Association of School Nurses
- Dante McKay, Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities Youth Mental Health Director
- Jonathan Parker, Georgia Emergency Management Agency/Homeland Security Special Agent
- Cheryl Benefield, Georgia Department of Education Mental Health and Wellbeing Coordinator
- Jason Byars, Georgia Department of Education Program Manager of PBIS
- Jeff Hodges, Georgia Department of Education Program Specialist Safe and Supportive Schools Program
- Molly Ream, Georgia Department of Education Program Manager of School Counseling
- Pat Schofill, Georgia Department of Education Director of Facilities and Transportation
- Ellen Steinberg, Georgia Department of Education Food Safety Specialist
- John Wight, Georgia Department of Education Program Specialist of Title Programs
- Garry McGiboney, Georgia Department of Education Deputy Superintendent Office of School Safety and Climate

APPENDICES

SCHOOL CLIMATE MODEL



Prevention

A positive school climate helps prevent emergencies because it reduces the incidence of behaviors that contribute to crisis (e.g., violence, bullying, harassment, substance abuse, and suicide). Schools with positive school climates engage students in developing strong relationships with staff and peers, which increases the likelihood that students will quickly report potential threats to trusted adults within the school before an incident occurs.

Protection

A positive school climate helps protect the school, students, and staff from minor and major incidents that reduce the vulnerabilities of schools and resources in order to deter, mitigate, or neutralize threats against school safety.

Response

Schools with positive school climates teach students the social and emotional competencies that enable them to develop persistence, tolerance of frustration, and ability to manage their emotions before and during an emergency.

Recovery

A positive school climate helps in the recovery from an emergency because it represents a commitment to providing socio-emotional supports, physical safety, and the importance of restoration to students and staff members.

Definitions

Disaster - Any natural or manmade incident, including terrorism, which results in extraordinary levels of mass casualties, damage, or disruption that severely affects the population, infrastructure, environment, economy, national morale, and/or government functions. A catastrophic incident could result in sustained national impacts over a prolonged period of time; almost immediately exceeds resources normally available to local, state, tribal, territorial, insular area, and private sector authorities in the impacted area; and significantly interrupts governmental operations and emergency services to such an extent that national security could be threatened.

Critical Infrastructure - Those systems and facilities in both the public and private sector that are essential to the Nation's security, public health and safety, economic vitality, and way of life. The Nation's infrastructure is composed of 16 primary sectors such as water, transportation, communications, dams, energy and emergency services to name a few. Although infrastructure systems are defined and may operate independently; there are many interdependencies between the 16 sectors and their associated systems and facilities that need to be considered in making a community, state or region whole following a major disaster.

Mitigation - Capabilities necessary to reduce loss of life and property by lessening the impact of disasters. Mitigation capabilities include, but are not limited to, community-wide risk reduction projects; efforts to improve the resilience of critical infrastructure and key resource lifelines; risk reduction for specific vulnerabilities from natural hazards or acts of terrorism; and initiatives to reduce future risks after a disaster has occurred.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) - A framework designed to enhance academic and social-behavior outcomes by implementing a continuum of evidence-based interventions.

Recovery – Those capabilities necessary to assist communities affected by an incident to recover effectively, including, but not limited to, rebuilding infrastructure systems; providing adequate interim and long-term housing for survivors; restoring health, social, and community services; promoting economic development; and restoring natural and cultural resources.

Resilience - Ability to adapt to changing conditions and withstand and rapidly recover from disruption due to emergencies.

RESA – Regional Education Service Agency include sixteen strategically located professional development centers for training of school districts to improve the effectiveness of schools.

Risk - The potential for an unwanted outcome resulting from an incident, event, or occurrence, as determined by its likelihood [a function of threats and vulnerabilities] and the associated consequences

Risk Management - The process of identifying, analyzing, and communicating risks and accepting, avoiding, transferring, or controlling it to an acceptable level at an acceptable cost.

Response - Those capabilities necessary to save lives, protect property and the environment, and meet basic human needs after an incident has occurred.

School Climate Rating – A diagnostic tool within the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) to determine whether a school is on the right path to school improvement.

School Climate Specialists – State funded staff members assigned to each RESA with the primary responsibility of providing training and technical assistance to school districts on school climate, PBIS, and school safety.

Sustainability - Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Threat - The natural or manmade occurrence, individual, entity, or action that has or indicates the potential to harm life, information, operations, the environment, and/or property.

Vulnerability - The physical feature or operational attribute that renders an entity open to exploitation or susceptible to a given hazard

Official Code of Georgia (OCGA) Referencing School Safety, Student Discipline, Felonies, Child Abuse, School Climate, and related statutes

- § 15-11-63. Designated felony acts
- § 15-11-83. School principal must be notified when a child commits a felony
- § 16-11-127.1. Carrying weapons within school safety zones, at school functions, or on a bus or other transportation furnished by a school
- § 16-11-130.1. Allowing personnel to carry weapons within certain school safety zones and at school functions
- § 19-7-5. Reporting child abuse and neglect
- § 19-7-6. Reporting juvenile drug use
- § 20-2-143. Sexual abuse and assault awareness prevention education; sex education
- § 20-2-144. Mandatory instruction concerning alcohol and drug use
- § 20-2-751.1. Expulsion of students who bring or possess weapons at school
- § 20-2-145. Character education (mandatory instruction)
- § 20-2-149. Program for educating students regarding online Internet safety
- § 20-2-155. School climate management program
- § 20-2-188. Student transportation
- § 20-2-314. Development of rape prevention, personal safety education, and teen dating violence prevention programs
- § 20-2-324. Internet safety policies in public schools
- § 20-2-324.2. Video monitoring cameras in classrooms providing special education services
- § 20-2-690.2. School Climate and Attendance Committee
- § 20-2-738. Authority of teacher over classroom
- § 20-2-739. Conflict management and resolution; cultural diversity training programs
- § 20-2-741. Positive behavioral interventions and supports and response to intervention
- § 20-2-742. Multi-tiered system of supports prior to suspension or expulsion for certain students
- § 20-2-751.4. Policies prohibiting bullying; assignment to alternative school
- § 20-2-751.5. Student codes of conduct; safety rules on school buses
- § 20-2-751.6. Disciplinary policy for students committing acts of violence against teacher, school bus driver, or other school official or employee
- § 20-2-751.7. State mandated process for students to follow in reporting instances of alleged inappropriate behavior by teacher or other school personnel
- § 20-2-775. AED required for high schools with athletic programs
- § 20-2-776. Student retention and self-administration of auto-injectable epinephrine

- § 20-2-779.1. Suicide prevention training for certificated school system personnel
- § 20-2-1125. Annual mandatory training of school bus drivers
- § 20-2-1126. Written policies and procedures for operation of school buses
- § 20-2-1130. Duties of law enforcement and school officials as to traffic safety around schools
- § 20-2-1180. Loitering in or on a school safety zone; penalty; required check in of visitors; posting signs of required check in
- § 20-2-1181. Disrupting a public school
- § 20-2-1182. Persons other than students who insult or abuse schoolteachers in presence of pupils may be ordered to leave school premises
- § 20-2-1183. Electronic devices on school property
- § 20-2-1184. Reporting of student committing prohibited acts
- § 20-2-1185. School safety plans; safety drills
- § 20-14-33. School Climate Star Rating

State Board Rules Referencing School Safety and Climate

- 160-1-3-.03 INFECTIOUS DISEASES
- 160-4-2-.12 COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION PROGRAM PLAN
- 160-4-3-.10 EYE PROTECTION
- 160-4-8-.01 STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES
- 160-4-8-.04 CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT REPORTING
- 160-4-8-.15 STUDENT DISCIPLINE
- 160-4-8-.16 UNSAFE SCHOOL CHOICE OPTION (USCO)
- 160-4-8-.19 SUICIDE PREVENTION TRAINING REQUIREMENT FOR CERTIFICATED SCHOOL SYSTEM PERSONNEL
- 160-5-1-.10 STUDENT ATTENDANCE
- 160-5-1-.35 SECLUSION AND RESTRAINT FOR ALL STUDENTS
- 160-5-3-.03 SCHOOL BUS INSPECTIONS
- 160-5-3-.13 STUDENT SAFETY (School Buses)
- 160-5-3-.15 ALCOHOL AND CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES TESTING
Local boards of education shall adopt a policy concerning the testing for alcohol and controlled substance abuse by employees who are engaged in safety-sensitive functions as mandated by federal law.

Resources for Schools

- [Georgia Emergency Management & Homeland Security Agency - School Safety Unit](#)
- [Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports \(PBIS\)](#)
- [Virtual Learning](#)
- [Improving School Climate](#)
- [School Climate Star Rating](#)
- [Georgia Student Health Survey](#)
- [Student Attendance](#)
- [Student Discipline](#)
- [Pandemic Planning for Schools](#)
- [Safe School Plan *and Continuity of Operations Template for Schools*](#)
- [Protecting America's Schools: A U.S. Secret Service Analysis of Targeted School Violence](#)
- [GEMA/Homeland Security School Safety Guide](#)
- [Guide for Preventing and Responding to School Violence](#)
- [See Something, Send Something Digital Reporting App](#)
- [School Safety Checklist](#)
- [How Safe is Your School? \(Safety Checklist PowerPoint Presentation\)](#)
- [Stop the Bleed Georgia](#)
- [CPR Courses for Schools](#)
- [School Resource Officers, School Law Enforcement Units, and FERPA](#)
- [Best Practice Considerations for Schools in Active Shooter and Other Armed Assailant Drills \(Guidance from the National Association of School Psychologists and the National Association of School Resource Officers\)](#)
- [Cyber Safety Considerations for K-12 Schools and School Districts](#)
- [Cyber Security Considerations for K-12 Schools and School Districts](#)
- [Preparing for Floods at K-12 Schools and School Districts](#)

- **Georgia Flood Map Program (assess flood risk)**
- **Site Assessment Tools**
- **School Design Tools**
- **Safety Precautions for Portable Classrooms**
- **Voluntary Guidelines for Carbon Monoxide Detectors for New and Existing Schools**
- **Task Force on Carbon Monoxide Detectors for Schools Final Report**
- **Carbon Monoxide Detector Advisory**
- **School Chemistry Laboratory Safety Guide**



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