

House Bill 515

By: Representatives Jasperse of the 11th, Powell of the 32nd, Clark of the 147th, Ballinger of the 23rd, Prince of the 127th, and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to
2 elementary and secondary education, so as to require certain state departments and agencies
3 to provide recommended school construction designs and measures that advance school
4 safety; to provide that the design of construction involving a schoolhouse receives
5 recommendations on safety innovations from the Georgia Emergency Management and
6 Homeland Security Agency; to provide for review and penalty; to provide for rules and
7 regulations; to provide for a standard for school safety plans; to require and provide for an
8 annual school safety drill; to provide that every local board of education shall provide an
9 annual report on school safety; to require the Georgia Bureau of Investigation to develop and
10 distribute to every public school a digital copy of information for displays about any certain
11 applications for the reporting of suspicious, unsafe, or unlawful activity; to require every
12 public school to post such displays in certain spaces; to require each local board of education
13 to post a certain link to certain applications for the reporting of suspicious, unsafe, or
14 unlawful activity; to provide for duties of the Board of Homeland Security in matters of
15 school safety; to provide for collaboration between the Board of Homeland Security and each
16 student attendance and school climate committee of each county; to provide for related
17 matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

18 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

19 style="text-align:center">**SECTION 1.**

20 Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to elementary and
21 secondary education, is amended in Code Section 20-2-520, relating to acquiring and
22 disposing of school sites and building, repairing, renting, and furnishing schoolhouses, by
23 adding a new subsection to read as follows:

24 "(d) The Department of Education, in conjunction with the Georgia Emergency
25 Management and Homeland Security Agency and the Department of Public Safety, shall
26 on January 1, 2020, and on the first business day following January 1 every year thereafter,

27 issue a report of recommended school construction designs and measures that shall be
 28 considered for construction documents whereon the seal of a registered architect has not
 29 been affixed prior to January 1, 2020. If such recommended school construction designs
 30 and measures are not used, the reason for such nonuse shall be provided in the review
 31 provided under paragraph (1) of subsection (e) of this Code section.

32 (e)(1) In the design phase in planning for any construction of a schoolhouse for which
 33 the seal of a registered architect is required to be on the construction documents, prior to
 34 such seal being affixed to such construction documents, the Georgia Emergency
 35 Management and Homeland Security Agency shall review such construction documents
 36 and shall provide any further recommendations on the inclusion of safety innovations in
 37 such construction. Upon review of such construction documents, the Georgia Emergency
 38 Management and Homeland Security Agency shall issue a certificate of review for such
 39 construction documents indicating review and any recommendations provided for such
 40 construction documents. This subsection shall apply to construction documents whereon
 41 the seal of a registered architect has not been affixed prior to January 1, 2020.

42 (2) Prior to the commencement of any construction provided for in construction
 43 documents under paragraph (1) of this subsection, a county or independent board of
 44 education or a board of education of an area school system shall submit such construction
 45 documents whereon the seal of a registered architect has been affixed, as well as a
 46 certificate of review from the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security
 47 Agency to the State School Superintendent for confirmation of compliance with this
 48 subsection.

49 (3)(A) The State School Superintendent shall promulgate rules and regulations for
 50 determining if any county or independent board of education or a board of education
 51 of an area school system has not complied with the requirements of this subsection.

52 (B) A county or independent board of education or a board of education of an area
 53 school system which does not comply with the requirements of this subsection shall be
 54 subject to the withholding of any state funding for construction projects until such time
 55 that the State School Superintendent provides that remedial measures have been taken
 56 to cure such noncompliance."

57 **SECTION 2.**

58 Said chapter is further amended by revising Code Section 20-2-1185, relating to school
 59 safety plans and drills, as follows:

60 "20-2-1185.

61 (a) Every public school shall prepare a school safety plan to help curb the growing
 62 incidence of violence in schools, to respond effectively to such incidents, and to provide

63 a safe learning environment for Georgia's children, teachers, and other school personnel.
 64 On and after August 1, 2019, such school safety plan shall be based upon the operational
 65 guide for preventing targeted school violence issued by the United States Secret Service
 66 and in effect on January 1, 2019. Such plan shall also address preparedness for natural
 67 disasters, hazardous materials or radiological accidents, acts of violence, and acts of
 68 terrorism. School safety plans of public schools shall be prepared with input from students
 69 enrolled in that school, parents or legal guardians of such students, teachers in that school,
 70 community leaders, other school employees and school district employees, and local law
 71 enforcement, juvenile court, fire service, public safety, and emergency management
 72 agencies. As part of such plans, public schools shall provide for the coordination with local
 73 law enforcement agencies and the local juvenile court system. School safety plans shall
 74 include, at a minimum, the following strategy areas:

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

79 (2) Evaluating and refining school security measures;

80 (3) Updating and exercising school emergency preparedness plans;

81 (4) Strengthening partnerships with public safety officials; and

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

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

89 (a.1)(1) Beginning on August 1, 2019, and by August 1 every year thereafter, each public
 90 school in this state shall submit its school safety plan to the Georgia Emergency
 91 Management and Homeland Security Agency for approval of compliance with this Code
 92 section. At the time of submission to the Georgia Emergency Management and
 93 Homeland Security Agency, each public school shall also submit its school safety plan
 94 to the local emergency management agency and all local law enforcement agencies
 95 having jurisdiction over the geographical area of such public school.

96 (2) By August 1, 2022, the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security
 97 Agency shall conduct an initial site visit of each public school for an evaluation of
 98 whether such public school's most recently submitted school safety plan adequately
 99 incorporates best practice safety measures. After such initial site visit, the Georgia

100 Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency shall conduct a site visit of
101 such public school for the same purposes within every three years thereafter.

102 (b) A public school may request funding assistance from the state for facilities,
103 technology, or other safety improvements or initiatives, such as the installation of safety
104 equipment, including, but not limited to, video surveillance cameras, metal detectors,
105 alarms, communications systems, building access controls, and other similar security
106 devices. The Department of Education shall establish criteria that will be applied in
107 reviewing funding requests pursuant to this subsection which shall take into consideration
108 the physical security needs of the public school in evaluating how the school safety plan
109 and funding request will support such physical security needs. Funding may be provided
110 to a public school in accordance with a school safety plan prepared by the school and
111 approved by the local board of education, the local law enforcement agency, the
112 Department of Education, and the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland
113 Security Agency; provided, however, that a public school shall be required to match the
114 state funding with local funds unless the school can demonstrate a substantial hardship.

115 (c) School safety plans prepared by public schools shall address security issues in school
116 safety zones as defined in Code Section 16-11-127.1. School safety plans should also
117 address security issues involving the transportation of pupils to and from school and school
118 functions when such transportation is furnished by the school or school system and school
119 functions held during noninstructional hours.

120 (d) The Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency shall provide
121 training and technical assistance to public school systems, and may provide this same
122 training and technical assistance to private school systems and independent private schools
123 throughout this state in the area of emergency management and safe school operations.
124 This training and technical assistance shall include, but shall not be limited to, crisis
125 response team development, site surveys and safety audits, crisis management planning,
126 exercise design, safe school planning, emergency operations planning, search and seizure,
127 bomb threat management, and model school safety plans.

128 (e) Every public school shall conduct drills with students, teachers, ~~and~~ or other school
129 personnel on the execution of school safety plans in such form and at such intervals based
130 upon guidance from the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency;
131 provided, however, that, in coordination with the sheriff or a local law enforcement agency
132 with jurisdiction over its geographical area, every public school shall conduct safety drills
133 on reacting to potential mass casualty incidents at least once each school year; and
134 provided, further, that participation of students in such safety drills or reacting to potential
135 mass casualty incidents shall be at the discretion of the public school.

136 (f) Beginning July 1, 2019, each school year every local board of education shall provide
 137 an annual report to the public for the prior school year and up to the date of the annual
 138 report on all projects, initiatives, and activities initiated, completed, or maintained in
 139 furtherance of school safety planning, including, but not limited to, the amount of funding
 140 spent for purposes of school safety; provided, however, that nothing in this subsection shall
 141 be construed to require a local board of education to disclose operational details or the
 142 existence of activities that, by the disclosure of which, would compromise a school safety
 143 plan; and provided, further, that nothing in this subsection shall in any way operate or be
 144 construed to affect, repeal, or limit the exemption of school safety plans from public
 145 disclosure as provided for in paragraph (25.1) of Code Section 50-18-72."

146 SECTION 3.

147 Said chapter is further amended by adding new Code sections to read as follows:

148 "20-2-1186.

149 (a) The Georgia Bureau of Investigation shall develop and distribute to every public school
 150 a digital copy of information that can be used by such public schools to create paper
 151 displays of at least 24 inches by 36 inches advertising any smartphone or other digital
 152 application developed by the Department of Public Safety, the Georgia Bureau of
 153 Investigation, or the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency that
 154 allows citizens to report observations of suspicious, unsafe, or unlawful activity.

155 (b) Every public school shall prominently post such paper displays provided for under
 156 subsection (a) of this Code section at the main entrance to such school, in each room where
 157 students typically gather to eat lunch, and in the school's gymnasium or other inside area
 158 where students typically gather for physical education or for sports competitions.

159 (c) Each local board of education and each public school shall post on its website a link
 160 to download any smartphone or other digital application developed by the Department of
 161 Public Safety, the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, or the Georgia Emergency
 162 Management and Homeland Security Agency that allows citizens to report observations
 163 of suspicious, unsafe, or unlawful activity. Near any such link the local board of education
 164 and public school shall provide a general description of the application and of its use for
 165 reporting suspicious, unsafe, or unlawful activity.

166 20-2-1187.

167 (a) As provided for in Code Section 38-3-42, the Board of Homeland Security shall act as
 168 an oversight board for school safety in this state. The Board of Homeland Security shall
 169 create a state-wide threat management team to coordinate school safety efforts, including
 170 resources used for such purposes from executive branch agencies, public schools, local law

171 enforcement agencies, and mental health agencies and service providers. Such threat
172 management team shall develop school safety security models and standards and best
173 practices for use by public schools and local law enforcement agencies. Such team shall
174 advise the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency in the
175 fulfillment of its duties relating to all matters of school safety.

176 (b) Each student attendance and school climate committee of each county as provided for
177 under Code Section 20-2-690.2 shall submit a copy of any recommendations made
178 pursuant to subsection (f) of Code Section 20-2-690.2 to the Board of Homeland Security.

179 The Board of Homeland Security shall distribute information to each student attendance
180 and school climate committee of each county on innovations and best practices concerning
181 school security practices."

182 **SECTION 4.**

183 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.