

1 State of Arkansas  
2 93rd General Assembly  
3 Regular Session, 2021  
4

# A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1549

5 By: Representative Cozart  
6 By: Senator Irvin  
7

## For An Act To Be Entitled

9 AN ACT TO AMEND VARIOUS PROVISIONS OF THE 2015 SCHOOL  
10 SAFETY ACT; TO ESTABLISH THE ARKANSAS CENTER FOR  
11 SCHOOL SAFETY OF THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE INSTITUTE  
12 ADVISORY BOARD; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.  
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## Subtitle

15 TO AMEND VARIOUS PROVISIONS OF THE 2015  
16 SCHOOL SAFETY ACT; AND TO ESTABLISH THE  
17 ARKANSAS CENTER FOR SCHOOL SAFETY OF THE  
18 CRIMINAL JUSTICE INSTITUTE ADVISORY  
19 BOARD.  
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22

23 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:  
24

25 SECTION 1. Arkansas Code § 6-15-1302 is amended to read as follows:

26 6-15-1302. Emergency operation plans and ~~panic button alert system~~  
27 emergency communication with law enforcement requirements.

28 (a) On or before ~~September 1, 2015,~~ October 1, 2021, a public school  
29 shall have a panic button alert system ~~if funding is available~~ or other means  
30 of emergency communication with law enforcement if funding is available.

31 (b) The panic button alert system shall:

32 (1) Connect the caller with 911 while simultaneously notifying  
33 designated on-site personnel;

34 (2)(A) Directly integrate into the existing statewide Smart911  
35 system.

36 (B) The Smart911 system shall provide a way for a public



1 school to geo-fence the school campus and provide and manage floor plans and  
 2 other documents to assist emergency responders when they automatically  
 3 display during a 911 call;

4 (3) Be available for use as a smartphone application and have a  
 5 mechanism for panic notifications to be triggered by non-smartphone wireless  
 6 callers and landline callers; and

7 (4) Be limited to users designated, approved, and confirmed by  
 8 school administrators.

9  
 10 SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 6-15-1303 is amended to read as follows:

11 6-15-1303. Safe Schools Initiative Act.

12 ~~(a)(1) A school district shall develop a school safety plan and~~  
 13 ~~provide annual training for all of its employees and students, to the extent~~  
 14 ~~practicable, in preventing and responding to acts of violence, terrorism,~~  
 15 ~~natural disaster, and other emergencies, including without limitation:~~

16 ~~(1) Tornado safety drills under § 6-10-121;~~

17 ~~(2) Emergency plans and panic button alert systems under § 6-15-~~  
 18 ~~1302; and~~

19 ~~(3)(A) Annual active shooter drills and school safety~~  
 20 ~~assessments in collaboration with local law enforcement and emergency~~  
 21 ~~management personnel for all schools, including a school lockdown exercise~~  
 22 ~~with panic button alert system training.~~

23 ~~(B) The purpose of the training is to allow participants~~  
 24 ~~to:~~

25 ~~(i) Discuss simulated emergency situations in a low-~~  
 26 ~~stress environment;~~

27 ~~(ii) Clarify the roles and responsibilities of~~  
 28 ~~individuals and the logistics of handling an emergency on the school campus;~~  
 29 ~~and~~

30 ~~(iii) Identify areas in which the school safety plan~~  
 31 ~~should be modified~~ A public school district or open-enrollment charter school  
 32 shall conduct a comprehensive school safety audit every three (3) years to  
 33 assess the safety, security, accessibility, and emergency preparedness of  
 34 district buildings and grounds in collaboration with local law enforcement,  
 35 fire, and emergency management officials.

36 (2)(A) A comprehensive school safety audit shall be conducted by

1 more than one (1) individual, including at least one (1) individual who is  
 2 not assigned to the facility being audited, if the audit is conducted by  
 3 district personnel.

4 (B) A comprehensive school safety audit shall include  
 5 without limitation an audit of the following:

6 (i) Safety and security of the site and exterior of  
 7 buildings;

8 (ii) Access control;

9 (iii) Safety and security of the interior of  
 10 buildings;

11 (iv) Monitoring and surveillance, including without  
 12 limitation type and extent;

13 (v) Communication and information security;

14 (vi) Review of emergency operation plans; and

15 (vii) School climate and culture.

16 (3) The initial comprehensive school safety audit shall be  
 17 conducted by August 1, 2024.

18 (4) The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education shall  
 19 promulgate rules specifying how the completion of the audit and confirmation  
 20 of collaboration with local law enforcement and emergency management  
 21 officials shall be verified.

22 (b)(1) A public school district or open-enrollment charter school  
 23 shall conduct an annual lockdown drill for a possible threat on campus at  
 24 each school in the public school district or open-enrollment charter school.

25 (2) As part of the public school district or open-enrollment  
 26 charter school's planning for lockdown drills, the public school district or  
 27 open-enrollment charter school shall:

28 (A) Assess the plan and ability of the public school  
 29 district or open-enrollment charter school to prevent and respond to a threat  
 30 on campus;

31 (B) Identify the roles and responsibilities of each  
 32 individual when an emergency occurs;

33 (C) Discuss the logistics of responding to an emergency on  
 34 the school campus;

35 (D) Identify areas in which the emergency operation plan  
 36 of the school may require modification, if necessary; and

1 (E) Collaborate with local law enforcement and emergency  
 2 management officials.

3 (3) The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education shall  
 4 promulgate rules describing how the completion of the drills and confirmation  
 5 of collaboration with local law enforcement and emergency management  
 6 officials shall be verified.

7 ~~(b)(1)(c)(1)~~ On or before September 1, 2015, October 1, 2021, a public  
 8 school shall provide current floor plans and pertinent emergency contact  
 9 information to be used in connection with the panic button alert system  
 10 through the statewide Smart911 system appropriate first responders.

11 (2) Public school administration shall update the provide  
 12 updated information as necessary, including annually and when substantial  
 13 building modifications or changes are made.

14 (3) Information provided under this subsection is not a public  
 15 record and is not available for public inspection.

16 (4) The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education shall  
 17 promulgate rules describing how public school compliance with subdivisions  
 18 (c)(1) and (2) of this section will be verified.

19 ~~(e)(1)(d)(1)~~ Subject to an appropriation and funding for this purpose,  
 20 the Criminal Justice Institute shall provide the necessary training and  
 21 education for: Subject to continued appropriation and funding for this  
 22 purpose, the Arkansas Center for School Safety of the Criminal Justice  
 23 Institute shall assist the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education in  
 24 building the capacity of educators, leaders, and law enforcement  
 25 professionals to meet the safety needs of children in public schools in this  
 26 state.

27 ~~(A) Personnel designated by a school district or an~~  
 28 ~~education service cooperative concerning the active shooter drills required~~  
 29 ~~under this section through its Safe Schools Initiative; and~~

30 ~~(B) Law enforcement officers, emergency management~~  
 31 ~~personnel, and other persons who will conduct the school safety assessments~~  
 32 ~~and active shooter drills on a school campus under this section.~~

33 (2) The Arkansas Center for School Safety of the Criminal  
 34 Justice Institute shall promote and support school safety statewide and shall  
 35 provide school safety training, education, and resources for school,  
 36 district, and law enforcement personnel.

1           ~~(2)(A)(3)(A)~~ The Safe Schools Initiative training for school  
 2 personnel shall be hosted by an education service cooperative of which the  
 3 school district is a constituent The Arkansas Center for School Safety of the  
 4 Criminal Justice Institute shall be the state school safety clearinghouse and  
 5 shall collaborate with the following entities to provide a comprehensive,  
 6 efficient, and effective resource for education and law enforcement personnel  
 7 to obtain training and technical assistance to meet the school safety needs  
 8 of students in this state:

9                           (i) The Division of Elementary and Secondary  
 10 Education;

11                           (ii) The Safe Schools Committee established under §  
 12 6-15-1301 et seq.;

13                           (iii) The Arkansas Association of Educational  
 14 Administrators;

15                           (iv) The Arkansas Schools Boards Association;

16                           (v) Education service cooperatives;

17                           (vi) The Division of Emergency Management;

18                           (vii) The Arkansas Public School Resource Center,  
 19 Inc.; and

20                           (viii) Other key stakeholders.

21           (B) ~~The designated personnel who receive the Safe Schools~~  
 22 ~~Initiative training shall train other school employees and students~~ The  
 23 Division of Elementary and Secondary Education shall collaborate actively  
 24 with the Arkansas Center for School Safety of the Criminal Justice Institute  
 25 and shall promote the training and resources provided by the Arkansas Center  
 26 for School Safety of the Criminal Justice Institute to public school district  
 27 or open-enrollment charter school staff.

28           (C) ~~The Safe Schools Initiative training also provided by~~  
 29 ~~the Arkansas Center for School Safety of the Criminal Justice Institute~~ may  
 30 include without limitation the training and education needed to assist a  
 31 public school or private school in:

32                           (i) ~~Developing prevention strategies and enhancing~~  
 33 ~~existing crisis management~~ emergency response plans for campus security and  
 34 safety issues;

35                           (ii) ~~Delivering education to students and faculty on~~  
 36 ~~public~~ Addressing public safety and legal topics such as drugs and alcohol

1 abuse, sexual assault, dating violence, bullying and cyber-bullying, gangs,  
 2 preventing the possession of weapons by minors, and responding to the threat  
 3 of weapons at school;

4 (iii) ~~Preparing~~ Conducting school safety ~~assessments~~  
 5 audits; and

6 (iv) Cooperating effectively with law enforcement  
 7 officers, school resource officers, and other school safety personnel, in the  
 8 school setting; and

9 (v) Other relevant school safety topics,  
 10 initiatives, and programs.

11 ~~(3) The following agencies or persons may conduct a school~~  
 12 ~~safety assessment and active shooter drill for a school district after~~  
 13 ~~receiving training from the Criminal Justice Institute;~~

14 ~~(A) The Arkansas Law Enforcement Training Academy;~~

15 ~~(B) The Department of Arkansas State Police;~~

16 ~~(C) The Arkansas Department of Emergency Management;~~

17 ~~(D) The Black River Technical College Law Enforcement~~  
 18 ~~Training Academy; or~~

19 ~~(E) Other persons or entities identified on the Criminal~~  
 20 ~~Justice Institute's website as having received the training.~~

21 (4) Annual training and ~~active shooter~~ emergency response drills  
 22 may be conducted during the instructional day or during ~~non-instructional~~  
 23 noninstructional time periods as determined by the school district.

24 ~~(d)~~(e) Subject to an appropriation and funding for this purpose, each  
 25 public school, in collaboration with the school district, may install  
 26 communications equipment that is interoperable with the Arkansas Wireless  
 27 Information Network system.

28  
 29 SECTION 3. Arkansas Code Title 6, Chapter 15, Subchapter 13, is  
 30 amended to add an additional section to read as follows:

31 6-15-1305. Advisory Board of the Arkansas Center for School Safety of  
 32 the Criminal Justice Institute.

33 (a) There is established the Advisory Board of the Arkansas Center for  
 34 School Safety of the Criminal Justice Institute.

35 (b)(1) The board shall include the following members:

36 (A) The Director of the Criminal Justice Institute;

1                   (B) The Executive Director of the Arkansas Association of  
 2 Educational Administrators or his or her designee;

3                   (C) The Director of the Arkansas School Boards Association  
 4 or his or her designee;

5                   (D) The Director of the Division of Emergency Management  
 6 or his or her designee;

7                   (E) The Secretary of the Department of Education or his or  
 8 her designee;

9                   (F) The Director of the Division of Public School Academic  
 10 Facilities and Transportation or his or her designee;

11                   (G) The Director of the Arkansas Public School Resource  
 12 Center or his or her designee;

13                   (H) One (1) director of an educational service cooperative  
 14 in this state;

15                   (I) One (1) chief of police;

16                   (J) One (1) county sheriff;

17                   (K) One (1) school resource officer;

18                   (L) One (1) school administrator;

19                   (M) One (1) school teacher;

20                   (N) One (1) school counselor;

21                   (O) One (1) school-focused mental health professional; and

22                   (P) One (1) citizen at-large.

23                   (2)(A) The Governor shall appoint the members of the board for a  
 24 three-year term unless otherwise specified.

25                   (B) The term of a member of the board who serves by virtue  
 26 of his or her office shall continue until the member vacates the office.

27                   (C) Terms for initial appointments shall be staggered, to  
 28 the extent possible, so that an equal number of members shall rotate each  
 29 year.

31                   SECTION 4. Arkansas Code § 6-17-708 is amended to read as follows:

32                   6-17-708. ~~Teen~~ Mental health awareness and teen suicide awareness and  
 33 prevention professional development.

34                   (a)(1) The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education shall  
 35 require two (2) hours of professional development, or professional learning  
 36 credits as determined by the division, in mental health awareness and teen

1 suicide awareness and prevention for licensed public school personnel  
 2 according to the professional development schedule under § 6-17-709.

3 (2) The professional development under this section may be  
 4 accomplished through self-review of suitable mental health awareness and  
 5 suicide prevention materials approved by the division.

6 (b) The professional development under this section shall count toward  
 7 the satisfaction of requirements for professional development in the  
 8 Standards for Accreditation of Arkansas Public Schools and School Districts  
 9 and for licensure requirements for licensed personnel.

10  
 11 SECTION 5. Arkansas Code § 6-17-709(a)(3), concerning professional  
 12 development schedules, is amended to read as follows:

13 (3) In the ~~2015-2016~~ 2023-2024 school year and every fourth  
 14 school year thereafter, the mental health awareness and teen suicide  
 15 awareness and prevention professional development required under § 6-17-708;  
 16 and

17  
 18 SECTION 6. Arkansas Code § 6-18-2004, concerning comprehensive student  
 19 services under the School Counseling Improvement Act of 2019, is amended to  
 20 add an additional subsection to read as follows:

21 (d) By September 1, 2024, and every four (4) years following, a school  
 22 counselor shall receive Youth Mental Health First Aid training to learn the  
 23 risk factors and warning signs of mental health issues in adolescents, the  
 24 importance of early intervention, and how to help an adolescent who is in  
 25 crisis or expecting a mental health challenge.

26  
 27 SECTION 7. DO NOT CODIFY. Youth Mental Health First Aid training.

28 A school counselor who receives Youth Mental Health First Aid training  
 29 before the effective date of Section 6 of this act shall have met the initial  
 30 training requirement and the four-year timeframe for continued training shall  
 31 be calculated from the date of the initial training received by the school  
 32 counselor.