

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 2002 SESSION

CHAPTER 235

An Act to amend and reenact § 22.1-279.8 of the Code of Virginia, relating to school crisis and emergency management plans.

[H 46]

Approved March 22, 2002

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 22.1-279.8 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 22.1-279.8. School safety audits and school crisis and emergency management plans required.

A. For the purposes of this section, unless the context requires otherwise:

"School crisis and emergency management plan" means the essential procedures, operations, and assignments required to prevent, manage, and respond to a critical event or emergency, including natural disasters involving fire, flood, tornadoes, or other severe weather; loss or disruption of power, water, communications or shelter; bus or other accidents; medical emergencies; student or staff member deaths; explosions; bomb threats; gun, knife or other weapons threats; spills or exposures to hazardous substances; the presence of unauthorized persons or trespassers; the loss, disappearance or kidnapping of a student; hostage situations; violence on school property or at school activities; *incidents involving acts of terrorism*; and other incidents posing a serious threat of harm to students, personnel, or facilities.

"School safety audit" means a written assessment of the safety conditions in each public school to (i) identify and, if necessary, develop solutions for physical safety concerns, including building security issues and (ii) identify and evaluate any patterns of student safety concerns occurring on school property or at school-sponsored events. Solutions and responses may include recommendations for structural adjustments, changes in school safety procedures, and revisions to the school board's standards for student conduct.

B. The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall develop a list of items to be reviewed and evaluated in the school safety audits required by this section. Each local school board shall require all schools under its supervisory control to conduct school safety audits as defined in this section and consistent with such list. Each school shall maintain a copy of the school safety audit within the office of the school principal and shall make a copy of such report available for review upon written request.

Each school shall submit a copy of its school safety audit to the relevant school division superintendent. The division superintendent shall collate and submit all such school safety audits to the Virginia Center for School Safety.

C. The school board may establish a school safety audit committee to consist of representatives of parents, teachers, local law-enforcement agencies, judicial and public safety personnel, and the community at large. The school safety audit committee shall evaluate, in accordance with the directions of the local school board, the safety of each school and submit a plan for improving school safety at a public meeting of the local school board.

D. Each school board shall ensure that every school that it supervises shall develop a written school crisis and emergency management plan, consistent with the definition provided in this section. The Department of Education and the Virginia Center for School Safety shall provide technical assistance to the school divisions of the Commonwealth in the development of the school crisis and emergency management plans.

Upon consultation with local school boards, division superintendents, the Virginia Center for School Safety, and the Coordinator of Emergency Management, the Board of Education shall develop, and may revise as it deems necessary, a model school crisis and emergency management plan for the purpose of assisting the public schools in Virginia in developing viable, effective crisis and emergency management plans.