

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY — CHAPTER

An Act to amend and reenact § 22.1-279.8 of the Code of Virginia, relating to annual school safety audits; items to be reviewed; technology systems.

[H 561]

Approved

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, emergency management, and medical emergency response plans required.

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

"School crisis, emergency management, and medical emergency response 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, including cardiac arrest and other life-threatening 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. The plan shall include a provision that the Department of Criminal Justice Services and the Virginia Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund shall be contacted immediately to deploy assistance in the event of an emergency as defined in the emergency response plan when there are victims as defined in § 19.2-11.01. The Department of Criminal Justice Services and the Virginia Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund shall be the lead coordinating agencies for those individuals determined to be victims, and the plan shall also contain current contact information for both agencies.

"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 shall include recommendations for structural adjustments, changes in school safety procedures, and revisions to the school board's standards for student conduct.

B. The Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety, in consultation with the Department of Education, shall develop a list of items to be reviewed and evaluated in the school safety audits required by this section. Such items shall include (i) those incidents reported to school authorities pursuant to § 22.1-279.3:1 ~~and shall include~~; (ii) a school inspection walk-through using a standardized checklist provided by the Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety, which shall incorporate crime prevention through environmental design principles; *and (iii) specific technology systems, including physical security technologies, emergency telecommunication systems, and associated technology including equipment and software.*

The Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety shall prescribe a standardized report format for school safety audits, additional reporting criteria, and procedures for report submission, which may include instructions for electronic submission.

Each local school board shall require all schools under its supervisory control to annually conduct school safety audits, as defined in this section, consistent with such list and in collaboration with the chief law-enforcement officer of the locality or his designee. As part of each such audit, the school board shall create a detailed and accurate floor plan for each public school building in the local school division or shall certify that the existing floor plan for each such school is sufficiently detailed and accurate.

The results of such school safety audits shall be made public within 90 days of completion pursuant to this subsection. The local school board shall retain authority to withhold or limit the release of any security plans, walk-through checklists, floor plans, and specific vulnerability assessment components as provided in subdivision 4 of § 2.2-3705.2. The completed walk-through checklist shall be made available to the chief law-enforcement officer of the locality or his designee. Each school shall maintain a copy of the school safety audit, which may exclude such security plans, walk-through checklists, and vulnerability assessment components, within the office of the school principal and shall make a copy of such report available for review upon written request.

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57 Each school shall submit a copy of its school safety audit to the relevant school division
58 superintendent. The division superintendent shall collate and submit all such school safety audits, in the
59 prescribed format and manner of submission, to the Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety and
60 shall make available to the chief law-enforcement officer of the locality the results of such audits for his
61 review and recommendations.

62 C. The division superintendent shall establish a school safety audit committee to include, if available,
63 representatives of parents, teachers, local law-enforcement, emergency services agencies, local
64 community services boards, and judicial and public safety personnel. The school safety audit committee
65 shall review the completed school safety audits and submit any plans, as needed, for improving school
66 safety to the division superintendent for submission to the local school board.

67 D. Each school board shall ensure that every school that it supervises shall develop a written school
68 crisis, emergency management, and medical emergency response plan, consistent with the definition
69 provided in this section, and shall include the chief law-enforcement officer, the fire chief, the chief of
70 the emergency medical services agency, the executive director of the relevant regional emergency
71 medical services council, and the emergency management official of the locality, or their designees, in
72 the development of such plans. Each school division shall designate an emergency manager. The
73 Department of Education and the Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety shall provide technical
74 assistance to the school divisions of the Commonwealth in the development of the school crisis,
75 emergency management, and medical emergency response plans that describe the components of a
76 medical emergency response plan developed in coordination with local emergency medical services
77 providers, the training of school personnel and students to respond to a life-threatening emergency, and
78 the equipment required for this emergency response. The local school board, the chief law-enforcement
79 officer, the fire chief, the chief of the emergency medical services agency, the executive director of the
80 relevant regional emergency medical services council, and the emergency management official of the
81 locality, or their designees, shall annually review the written school crisis, emergency management, and
82 medical emergency response plans. The local school board shall have the authority to withhold or limit
83 the review of any security plans and specific vulnerability assessment components as provided in
84 subdivision 4 of § 2.2-3705.2. The local school division superintendent shall certify this review in
85 writing to the Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety no later than August 31 of each year.

86 Upon consultation with local school boards, division superintendents, the Virginia Center for School
87 and Campus Safety, and the Coordinator of Emergency Management, the Board of Education shall
88 develop, and may revise as it deems necessary, a model school crisis, emergency management, and
89 medical emergency response plan for the purpose of assisting the public schools in the Commonwealth
90 in developing viable, effective crisis, emergency management, and medical emergency response plans.
91 Such model shall set forth recommended effective procedures and means by which parents can contact
92 the relevant school or school division regarding the location and safety of their school children and by
93 which school officials may contact parents, with parental approval, during a critical event or emergency.

94 E. Each school board shall ensure that every public school it supervises employs at least one school
95 administrator who has completed, either in-person or online, school safety training for public school
96 personnel conducted by the Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety in accordance with
97 subdivision A 1 of § 9.1-184. However, such requirement shall not apply if such required training is not
98 available online.

99 F. Each division superintendent shall annually designate an employee in the local school division as
100 the division safety official whose duty is to receive all reports required pursuant to subsection A of
101 § 19.2-83.1 and §§ 19.2-291.1 and 19.2-299.3 and shall include such designation in the collated packet
102 of school safety audits submitted to the Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety pursuant to
103 subsection B. The designation required by this subsection shall include updated contact information for
104 the division safety official, including (i) a current mailing address, (ii) a current working daytime phone
105 number, (iii) a current functional email address, and (iv) a current functional fax number. It shall be the
106 duty of the division superintendent to update contact information required by this subsection within 48
107 hours of any change to such contact information.