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## HOUSE BILL NO. 561

## AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE

(Proposed by the House Committee on Education  
on February 7, 2024)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Delegate Askew)

A *BILL 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.*

**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.

Each school shall submit a copy of its school safety audit to the relevant school division

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60 superintendent. The division superintendent shall collate and submit all such school safety audits, in the  
61 prescribed format and manner of submission, to the Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety and  
62 shall make available to the chief law-enforcement officer of the locality the results of such audits for his  
63 review and recommendations.

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

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

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

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

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