



STATE OF TENNESSEE
EXECUTIVE ORDER
BY THE GOVERNOR

No. 97

AN ORDER TO ENHANCE K-12 SCHOOL SAFETY

WHEREAS, protecting school children, educators, and school staff by preventing and mitigating acts of violence is an essential goal of Tennessee state government; and

WHEREAS, recent tragedies have shaken parents' confidence in the security of their children's schools; and

WHEREAS, the State of Tennessee has invested over \$100 million in direct support to local education agencies ("LEAs") to support improvements in school safety, hiring of school resource officers, and building security; and

WHEREAS, the outcomes of such investments should be shared with parents and taxpayers to ensure accountability in the use of state and local resources and to promote transparency with respect to school safety.

NOW THEREFORE, I, Bill Lee, Governor of the State of Tennessee, by virtue of the power and authority vested in me by the Tennessee Constitution and the laws of Tennessee, do hereby declare that my Administration is committed to ensuring the security of students, educators, and staff in Tennessee's public schools. Accordingly, I hereby direct and order that:

1. The Department of Safety & Homeland Security and the Department of Education, in collaboration with other state agencies, shall jointly provide specific guidance and technical assistance to LEAs to implement the Schools Against Violence in Education Act (Tennessee Code Annotated Section 49-6-801, *et seq.*) and to promote compliance with Tennessee Code Annotated Section 49-6-4302, as amended by Public Chapter 966 (2022), which requires each Tennessee public school to conduct an annual school security assessment and submit an annual school safety plan to the Tennessee School Safety Center. Such guidance and assistance shall include:

- a. An increase in periodic audits of Tennessee local school security assessments and school safety plans, including but not limited to random, in-person verification by state officials of a school's implementation of the approved assessment;
- b. A set of best practices for school leaders to enhance building security and safety against an unauthorized intruder; and
- c. Information for district and local government leadership regarding financial resources for school safety available through state programs and the Tennessee Investment in Student Achievement Act (Tennessee Code Annotated Section 49-3-101, *et seq.*).

The Department of Education shall identify regional staff to support school safety in LEAs through repurposing existing staff to focus on safety, mental health, and family and community engagement.

- 2. The Department of Education, Department of Safety & Homeland Security, and Department of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services shall jointly publish a *School Safety Resources and Engagement Guide* to provide parents with information regarding how to effectively engage and advocate for safe conditions at their child's school. The guide shall cover how to report suspicious or concerning activity through the State's SafeTN App, access mental health resources for their child through programs administered by the Department of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services, and inquire about building security and compliance with Schools Against Violence in Education Act and Tennessee Code Annotated Section 49-6-4302 at their child's school.
- 3. No later than August 1, 2022, the Department of Safety & Homeland Security shall develop additional training and educational materials regarding school safety for educators, school leaders, and staff.
- 4. The Tennessee School Safety Center within the Department of Education shall, consistent with Tennessee Code Annotated Section 49-6-4302 as amended by Public Chapter 966 (2022) and in consultation with the Department of Safety & Homeland Security, update the template for LEA school safety plans that includes, among other statutory requirements, the following details:
 - a. A description of deficiencies identified by the LEA when conducting the school security assessment;
 - b. A description of district spending on building security and other school safety initiatives and how such expenditures mitigate the identified deficiencies; and
 - c. The designation of the Superintendent, Director of Schools, or other LEA officer as the district's single point of contact for school safety matters.

The Tennessee School Safety Center shall publish the updated school safety plan template for LEAs no later than July 1, 2022. LEAs must submit their school safety plans to the Tennessee School Safety Center annually, as required by Tennessee Code Annotated Section 49-6-4302 as amended by Public Chapter 966 (2022). LEAs are encouraged to submit their school safety plans as soon as practicable, thereby promoting the prompt identification and mitigation of security vulnerabilities at their schools. The Department of Education shall report the submission and completion of updated school safety plans to the Governor on August 1, 2022, and again on December 1, 2022.

Further, the Department of Education shall request from the US Department of Education permission for districts to use existing federal ESSER funds to conduct a fulsome, independent safety assessment, including the identification of necessary facility upgrades, and shall report to the Governor which districts utilize that flexibility and generate such safety assessments.

5. The Department of Commerce & Insurance, through the Tennessee Law Enforcement Training Academy (TLETA), shall collaborate with the Department of Safety & Homeland Security to evaluate and assess current law enforcement training standards for active shooter response training in Tennessee. Following completion of that assessment, and no later than July 1, 2022, TLETA shall make a report to the Governor recommending expansions, improvements, or enhancements to those standards and discussing the expansion of active shooter response training to local law enforcement agencies and related education stakeholders;
6. The Department of Commerce & Insurance, through the State Fire Marshal's Office, in collaboration with the Tennessee Department of Safety & Homeland Security and any other parties deemed necessary by the Department of Commerce & Insurance, shall ensure LEAs receive guidance regarding how to appropriately improve school building security while maintaining emergency egress and safeguarding of life and property from the hazards of fire and explosion;
7. The Department of Commerce & Insurance shall review the use of armed security guards in Tennessee non-public schools and shall, in collaboration with the Tennessee Department of Safety & Homeland Security, make a report to the Governor regarding the need for active-shooter training for armed guards and, if appropriate, recommendations regarding the content, frequency, and implementation of such training.
8. The Department of Education shall, in collaboration with the Department of Labor & Workforce Development, the Department of Commerce & Insurance, and the Department of Safety & Homeland Security, develop new collaborative strategies to increase the number of Tennesseans exploring and pursuing careers in law enforcement.
9. Parents, teachers, school leaders, and district leaders are encouraged to partner with law enforcement in promoting the habits and practices that help ensure school building security against unauthorized intruders. By implementing critical security practices, such as ensuring a single point of entry and multiple points of exit, securing vestibules and other

access points, and reporting suspicious activity, communities have the ability to vastly increase the security of their local school.

10. All executive branch departments, agencies, boards, and commissions shall cooperate fully in carrying out this Order and shall provide staff support and any other assistance as reasonably requested. The Department of Finance & Administration is authorized to identify and make available any lawfully appropriated funds to support execution of this Order.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have subscribed my signature and caused the Great Seal of the State of Tennessee to be affixed this 6th day of June, 2022


GOVERNOR