

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY



PA 19-52—sHB 7291

*Public Safety and Security Committee
Education Committee*

AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL SECURITY

SUMMARY: This act requires the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) to (1) update state school security and safety plan standards, (2) simplify certain school security reporting requirements and school security infrastructure grant applications, and (3) develop criteria to identify qualified school security consultants and limit the existing registry to only these individuals. It also adds related duties for the State Department of Education (SDE) and the School Safety Infrastructure Council.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage, except the requirements concerning the school security consultants registry are effective October 1, 2019.

SCHOOL SECURITY AND SAFETY PLANS

By law, each local and regional board of education (“board”) must develop and implement a school security and safety plan for each school within its district and DESPP, in consultation with SDE, must develop standards for these plans (see BACKGROUND). By January 1, 2020, and every three years thereafter, the act requires DESPP, in consultation with SDE, to reevaluate and update existing standards for these plans. It also requires SDE to distribute the standards to all public schools. Under existing law, DESPP must make the standards available to local officials, including the boards, and submit them annually to the Education and Public Safety and Security committees.

By law, boards must annually submit reports to DESPP on (1) their review, and, if necessary, their update of the school security and safety plans for each school within their districts, and (2) fire drills and crisis response drills in their schools where local law enforcement and other local public safety officials evaluate, score, and provide feedback on the drills. The act requires DESPP to evaluate and seek methods to simplify these board reporting requirements. DESPP must submit a report to the Public Safety and Security Committee by January 1, 2020, identifying the essential report components and indicating how the department will simplify the requirements. DESPP must implement new requirements, based on its findings, by July 1, 2020.

SCHOOL SECURITY INFRASTRUCTURE COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM

By law, boards can apply to DESPP, on behalf of their town or member towns, for funds under a competitive state grant program to improve school

OLR PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY

security infrastructure (PA 13-3 § 84). Under the act, DESPP and the School Safety Infrastructure Council must evaluate and seek methods to simplify the documentation requirements for these grant applications. Both DESPP and the council must submit a report to the Public Safety and Security Committee by January 1, 2020, identifying the essential application components and indicating how the department will simplify the documentation requirements. Both DESPP and the council must implement new requirements, based on their findings, by July 1, 2020.

SCHOOL SECURITY CONSULTANTS

The act requires DESPP to (1) develop criteria to identify qualified school security consultants operating in the state and (2) limit its existing school security consultants registry to include only these qualified individuals. By law, DESPP must update this registry annually, make it available to the public upon request, and publish it on the department's website.

BACKGROUND

School Security and Safety Plans

The plans must align with DESPP standards, which, among other things, (1) provide an all-hazards approach to handling emergencies at public schools, (2) require involvement of local education and public safety officials, and (3) require the creation of a security and safety committee at each school (CGS § 10-222n).

Related Act

PA 19-184 requires, among other things, that (1) DESPP, in consultation with SDE, revise the school security and safety plan standards by October 1, 2019, to include provisions relating to emergency communication plans and (2) boards revise their school security and safety plans by January 1, 2020, to include similar provisions.