

1 Introduced by Committee on Education

2 Date:

3 Subject: Education; school safety

4 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to require (1)  
5 public schools to adopt a policy mandating biannual options-based response  
6 drills; (2) approved independent schools to conduct biannual options-based  
7 response drills following the template developed by the Vermont School  
8 Safety Center; (3) public schools to adopt all-hazards emergency operation  
9 plans; (4) public schools to adopt an access control and visitor management  
10 policy; (5) approved independent schools to adopt access control and visitor  
11 management procedures; and (6) public and approved independent schools to  
12 create a behavioral threat assessment team.

13 An act relating to school safety

14 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

15 Sec. 1. 16 V.S.A. § 1481 is amended to read:

16 § 1481. FIRE AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS DRILLS

17 (a) ~~The principal or person in charge of a public or independent school or~~  
18 ~~another educational institution, other than a university or college, shall drill the~~  
19 ~~students so they are able to leave the school building or perform other~~  
20 ~~procedures described in the school's emergency preparedness plan, or both, in~~

1 ~~the shortest possible time and without panic or confusion.~~ Each school board  
2 in a district that operates a school shall adopt a policy mandating each school  
3 site to conduct options-based response drills at each school site in the fall and  
4 spring of each academic year. The policy shall require that drills be conducted  
5 following the guidance issued by the Vermont School Safety Center jointly  
6 with the Vermont School Crisis Planning Team. In issuing the guidance, the  
7 Vermont School Safety Center and the Vermont School Crisis Planning Team  
8 shall include trauma-informed best practices for implementing options-based  
9 drills. A superintendent shall report completion of the biannual drills to the  
10 Agency of Education in a format approved by the Secretary.

11 (b) ~~A drill shall be held at least once in each month during the school year~~  
12 ~~and a record of the date and time of the drill, together with the time consumed~~  
13 ~~in completing the procedure, shall be kept in the official school register, and~~  
14 ~~such register shall be open at all times for inspection by representatives from~~  
15 ~~the Fire Safety Division of the Department of Public Safety or the Agency of~~  
16 ~~Education.~~ Each approved or recognized independent school or other  
17 educational institution, other than a university or college, shall adopt a policy  
18 mandating the school to conduct options-based response drills in the fall and  
19 spring of each academic year, consistent with the requirements of subsection  
20 (a) of this section. The head of school shall report completion of the biannual  
21 drills to the Agency of Education in a format approved by the Secretary.

1 (c) A school district, independent school, or educational institution whose  
2 administrative personnel neglect to comply with the provisions of this section  
3 shall be fined not more than \$500.00.

4 (d) Annually, the Vermont School Safety Center and Agency of Education  
5 shall review the reports submitted according to this section and shall ensure  
6 compliance and identify future planning and training needs.

7 Sec. 2. 16 V.S.A. § 1480 is added to read:

8 § 1480. EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLANS

9 (a) Each supervisory union or supervisory district shall adopt and maintain  
10 an all-hazards emergency operations plan for each school site that is at least as  
11 comprehensive as the template maintained by the Vermont School Safety  
12 Center. The plan shall be reviewed and updated on an annual basis, including  
13 collaboration with local emergency first responders and local emergency  
14 management officials.

15 (b) Each approved and recognized independent school shall adopt and  
16 maintain an all-hazards emergency operations plan consistent with the  
17 requirements of subsection (a) of this section.

18 (c) The Vermont School Safety Center shall maintain an emergency  
19 operations plan template and update the template as appropriate.

1 Sec. 3. 16 V.S.A. § 1484 is added to read:

2 § 1484. ACCESS CONTROL AND VISITOR MANAGEMENT POLICY

3 (a) Each supervisory union, member district board, or supervisory district  
4 board shall adopt an access control and visitor management policy that, at  
5 minimum, requires that all school sites and supervisory union and supervisory  
6 district offices lock exterior doors during the school day. The policy shall  
7 require that all visitors sign in at a centralized location prior to gaining full  
8 access to the school or office site.

9 (b) Each approved and recognized independent school shall adopt a written  
10 access control and visitor management policy consistent with the requirements  
11 in subsection (a) of this section.

12 Sec. 4. 16 V.S.A. § 1485 is added to read:

13 § 1485. BEHAVIORAL THREAT ASSESSMENT TEAMS

14 (a) Each supervisory union or supervisory district and each approved  
15 independent school shall appoint a behavioral threat assessment team to be  
16 composed of, at a minimum, administrators, mental health professionals, a  
17 school counselor, a school nurse, and local law enforcement officials.  
18 Members of the team shall be trained at least annually in best practices of  
19 conducting behavioral threat assessments.

20 (b) Behavioral threat assessments shall not be used for a punitive or  
21 disciplinary purpose. A behavioral threat assessment shall not replace a

1 manifest determination review for students on an individual education plan, as  
2 required under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C.  
3 § 1415(k).

4 (c) Annually, each supervisory union, supervisory district, and approved  
5 independent school shall report data related to behavioral threat assessments to  
6 the Agency in a format approved by the Secretary. At a minimum, the annual  
7 report shall include:

8 (1) the names of the members of the behavioral assessment team;

9 (2) the number of behavioral threat assessments conducted in the  
10 preceding year and for each assessment conducted:

11 (A) a description of the behavior requiring an assessment;

12 (B) the age and grade of the student requiring the assessment; and

13 (C) the results of each assessment; and

14 (3) the number of students referred for a manifest determination review  
15 in lieu of a behavioral threat assessment.

16 Sec. 5. EFFECTIVE DATES

17 (a) This section shall take effect on July 1, 2023.

18 (b) Secs. 1 (16 V.S.A. § 1481) and 3 (16 V.S.A. § 1484 ) shall take effect  
19 on August 1, 2023.

20 (c) Secs. 2 (16 V.S.A. § 1480) and 4 (16 V.S.A. § 1485) shall take effect on  
21 July 1, 2024.