

Committee on Education

CS/CS/CS/HB 1421 — School Safety

by Education and Employment Committee; Secondary Education and Career Development Subcommittee; Early Learning and Elementary Education Subcommittee; and Reps. Hawkins, Hunchofsky, and others (CS/SB 802 by Appropriations Committee and Senators Gruters, Perry, Polsky, and Rodrigues)

The bill addresses school safety and security recommendations made by the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Commission (MSD Commission). The bill improves transparency around school safety and security and addresses student mental health by:

- Requiring the Office of Safe Schools (OSS) to develop a model family reunification plan that guides family reunification when K-12 public schools are closed or unexpectedly evacuated due to natural or manmade disasters, and requiring district school boards and charter school governing boards to adopt a reunification plan.
- Requiring that the State Board of Education adopt rules setting requirements for emergency drills including timing, frequency, participation, training, notification, and accommodations, and requiring that law enforcement officers responsible for responding to schools in the event of an assailant emergency be physically present and participate in active assailant drills.
- Requiring the Department of Education (DOE) to annually publish school safety and environmental incident reporting data in a uniform, statewide format that is easy to read and understand.
- Requiring safe-school officers that are sworn law enforcement officers to complete mental health crisis intervention training, and requiring safe-school officers that are not sworn law enforcement officers to receive training on incident response and de-escalation.
- Requiring that school district and local mobile response teams use the same suicide screening tool approved by the DOE.
- Requiring that school districts annually certify, beginning July 1, 2023, that at least 80 percent of school personnel received the mandatory youth mental health awareness training.
- Requiring the OSS to maintain a directory of public school diversion programs, providing to school districts information on the proper use of the School Safety Awareness Program, including the consequences of knowingly submitting false information, and providing a similar notification to users of the FortifyFL system.

The bill extends the sunset date of the MSD Commission until July 1, 2026, for the purpose of monitoring implementation of school safety legislation, and specifies additional duties. The bill also requires the Commissioner of Education to oversee and enforce school safety and security compliance in the state.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2022, except as otherwise provided.

Vote: Senate 39-0; House 115-0

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