



Connecticut Association of Boards of Education

School Security

All those that work and learn in our schools should feel safe and secure in order to thrive in their pursuits.

Issue Profile
September 2019

CABE's position:

CABE urges all Connecticut school boards:

1. To address the influence of violence affecting children through school board policies, parent education programs, peer mediation, student assisting teams, and the school district curriculum to maintain an environment that fosters learning and growth.
2. To develop and review safety plans that address prevention, preparedness, mitigation and emergency response and recovery.
3. To develop and maintain such plans in coordination with appropriate local, state and federal agencies.
4. To address environmental, health and safety risks, as well as potential security breaches.

CABE urges the state and federal government to provide greater and sustained resources for locally determined programs that are critical to school safety, including school resource officers, school counseling, emergency preparedness and response training and inter agency coordination. CABE also urges greater and sustained resources that expand access to mental health services and support comprehensive wraparound services to schools that include a range of community resources to address safety and intervention.

2019 Work of CABE and Partners

- *Statement to the Federal Commission on School Safety*
- *Joint position on school safety by CABE, CAPSS and CEA*

The General Assembly has adopted numerous laws addressing these issues

- **PA 13-3 AAC Gun Violence Prevention and Children's Safety**

Key Education Provisions

- Beginning July 1, 2014 boards of education will develop and implement a school safety and security plan. They shall also establish a school security and safety committee at each school consisting of local police officer, first responder, teacher and administrator, mental health professional, a parent or guardian of a student.

The school security and safety plan standards shall include a requirement that the school security and safety committee be established in each school, a requirement that local law enforcement and other local public and safety officials evaluate, score and provide feedback on fire and crisis response drills, boards of education annually submit reports to the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection regarding such fire and crisis response drills, boards of education conduct a security and vulnerability assessment for each school every two years, and that school security and safety plans provide an orientation on the plan to each school employee, and violence prevention training.

- Safe School Climate Committee (originally established to address bullying) will collect, evaluate and report the information relating to instances of disturbing or threatening behavior that may not be the definition of bullying.

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- The Commissioner of Mental Health and Addiction Services, in consultation with the Commissioner of Education, shall administer a mental health first aid training program. Each district safe school climate coordinator shall successfully complete the mental health first aid training. Boards of education may require teachers, nurses, counselors and others school employees to participate in mental health first aid training.
- The State Board of Education shall assist and encourage boards of education to include mental health first aid and training as part of in-service professional development. The Commissioner of Education must consider whether to include mental first aid training as a requirement in teacher preparation programs.
- The act establishes a task force to study the provision of behavioral health services, for persons between the ages of 16 and 25. The full report, (9 recommendations #21-29 for districts) can be found on the CAFE website at: www.cabe.org/reports
- The act establishes a School Safety Infrastructure Council. They have produced a report on school security and safety, using an all hazards approach. The new standards are published on the CAFE website at: www.cabe.org/reports
- School Construction Grant Applications on and after July 1, 2014 must comply with the school safety infrastructure standards.

Eligible expenses include development or improvement of the security infrastructure of schools (including surveillance cameras, penetration resistant vestibules, ballistic glass, solid core doors, double door access, computer-controlled electronic locks, entry door buzzer systems, scan card systems, panic alarms or other systems), the training of school personnel and maintenance of the security infrastructure, or the purchase of portable entrance security devices, including metal detector wands and screening machines. Reimbursement percentage 20% to 80%.

- The Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection shall establish and maintain a registry of school security consultants.

- **PA 14-232**
An Act Concerning the Review and Approval of Safe School Climate Plans by SDE and a Student Safety Hotline Feasibility Study

Not later than September 1, 2014, each board of education that has not had a safe school climate plan previously reviewed and approved by to SDE shall, submit a safe school climate plan to SDE for review and approval.

SDE must approve or reject school district safe school climate plans. If rejected, the BOE must adopt a model plan. Safe school climate surveys must be grade level appropriate. There must be a feasibility study for a student safety hotline.

- **PA 14-217**
An Act Implementing Provisions of the State Budget for the FY Ending 6/30/15

The act allows a municipality or board of education to hire or contract with retired federal law enforcement agents and retired officers from an out-of-state police department to provide armed school security services.

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- **PA 15-168**
An Act Concerning Collaboration Between Boards of Education and School Resource Officers and the Collection and Reporting of Data on School-Based Arrests

This act requires school boards that assign a sworn police officer to a school (school resource officer) to enter into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the police that defines the officer's role and responsibilities. The MOU must address daily interactions among students, school personnel, and police officers. **PA 15-5, June Special Session**, § 342 requires the MOU to include a graduated response model for student discipline.

- **PA 15-232**
An Act Concerning Trauma-Informed Practice Training for Teachers, Administrators and Pupil Personnel

The State Board of Education (SBE), within available appropriations, must assist and encourage local and regional school boards to provide in-service training on optional topics (mental health first aid training). A new law requires SBE to assist and encourage school boards to also include in their in-service training trauma-informed practices for the school setting, so that school employees can more adequately respond to students with mental, emotional, or behavioral health needs.



- **PA 16-188**
School Climate Task Force

PA 16-188, § 5 establishes a task force to review, streamline, and align state policies relating to school climate, bullying, school safety, and social-emotional learning.

- **PA 16-67**
School-Related Threats

This act increases the penalty for 1st degree threatening, from a class D felony to a class C felony, if the threat was made with intent to cause the evacuation of a building or the grounds of a public or private preschool, school, or higher education institution. It also increases the penalty for 2nd degree threatening, from a class A misdemeanor to a class D felony, if the threatened person was in the building or on the grounds of such a school facility during instructional hours or while they were being used for school- or institution-sponsored activities. The law establishes (1) conditions under which the Board of Pardons and Paroles must grant an absolute pardon to someone convicted of committing one of these threats and (2) an absolute defense to a civil action for reporting certain threats.

- **PA 16-171**
Security Infrastructure Competitive Grant Program

The legislature has extended, from June 30, 2016 to June 30, 2017, the sunset date for the school security infrastructure grant program, which provides grants to towns, schools, and regional service centers to improve security infrastructure in schools. Eligible infrastructure includes installation of surveillance cameras, penetration-resistant vestibules, ballistic glass, solid core doors, double-door access, computer-controlled electronic locks, entry door buzzer systems, scan card systems, and panic alarms.

- **PA 17-2**
June Special Session
An Act concerning the state budget for the biennium ending June 30, 2019, making appropriations therefore, authorizing and adjusting bonds of the state and implementing provisions of the budget

In PA 17-2, section 490, the school security grant program no longer has yearly deadlines to file applications. It has been made a permanent program.

2019 Changes

- **PA 19-52**

A new law requires DESPP to (1) update state school security and safety planstandards every three years, starting by January 1, 2020; (2) simplify certain school security reporting requirements; and (3) develop criteria to identify qualified school security consultants and limit the existing registry to such individuals only. It also adds related duties for SDE. DESPP must submit a report to the Public Safety and Security Committee by January 1, 2020, identifying the essential components for school security reporting and indicate how the department will simplify them. The department must implement the new requirements based on its findings by July 1, 2020 (PA 19-52, most provisions effective upon passage).
- **PA 19-5**

The legislature required SBE, within available appropriations, to develop guides to aid boards of education in developing firearm safety programs for public students in kindergarten through grade 12. It also allowed boards of education to offer firearm safety programs to K-12 public school students, rather than K-8 public school students as under prior law (PA 19-5, §§ 4 & 5, effective July 1, 2019).
- **PA 19-1**

The types of projects eligible for emergency construction grants has been expanded by the Legislature. (Unlike priority list projects, these do not require legislative approval.) By law, emergency grants can be made for certain reasons, such as correcting safety, health, and other code violations; replacing roofs; and making repairs due to fire or other catastrophe. The bill additionally allows these grants for school security projects, including improvements to existing security infrastructure or installing new security infrastructure. (July Special 2019 Session Public Act No. 19-1)

