

Chapter 293

(House Bill 1167)

AN ACT concerning

Maryland Center for School Safety – ~~Statewide~~ Secure Schools Emergency Response Grant Program – Established

FOR the purpose of establishing the ~~Statewide~~ Secure Schools Emergency Response Grant Program to be administered by the Maryland Center for School Safety to provide funds to improve the safety and security of public schools in the State by implementing a certain emergency notification system systems and communications between certain entities; and generally relating to the establishment of the ~~Statewide~~ Secure Schools Emergency Response Grant Program.

BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,

Article – Education

Section 7–1502(a)

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2022 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

Article – Education

Section 7–1502(g)(20) and (21)

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2022 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

BY adding to

Article – Education

Section 7–1502(g)(22) and 7–1513

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2022 Replacement Volume 2023 Supplement)

BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,

Article – Public Safety

Section 1–301(a), (j), (t), and (u)

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2022 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Education

7–1502.

(a) There is a Maryland Center for School Safety.

(g) The Center shall perform the following functions and duties:

(20) Review and comment on school emergency plans developed under § 7-1510 of this subtitle; [and]

(21) Report to the General Assembly and the Governor on life-threatening incidents as required under § 7-1510 of this subtitle; AND

(22) ADMINISTER THE ~~STATEWIDE~~ SECURE SCHOOLS EMERGENCY RESPONSE GRANT PROGRAM UNDER § 7-1513 OF THIS SUBTITLE.

7-1513.

(A) (1) IN THIS SECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS INDICATED.

(2) “EMERGENCY EVENT” MEANS AN EMERGENCY SITUATION THAT REQUIRES AN IMMEDIATE RESPONSE BY FIRST RESPONDERS.

~~(2)~~ (3) “FIRST RESPONDER” HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 1-301 OF THE PUBLIC SAFETY ARTICLE.

~~(3) “PANIC BUTTON EVENT” MEANS AN EMERGENCY SITUATION THAT COMPELS THE USER OF AN EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION SYSTEM TO PRESS A PANIC BUTTON TO INSTANTLY SUMMON HELP TO THEIR LOCATION FROM FIRST RESPONDERS OR OTHER PUBLIC SAFETY AGENCY PERSONNEL.~~

(4) “PROGRAM” MEANS THE ~~STATEWIDE~~ SECURE SCHOOLS EMERGENCY RESPONSE GRANT PROGRAM.

(5) “PUBLIC SAFETY AGENCY” HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 1-301 OF THE PUBLIC SAFETY ARTICLE.

(6) “PUBLIC SAFETY ANSWERING POINT” HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 1-301 OF THE PUBLIC SAFETY ARTICLE.

(B) (1) THERE IS A ~~STATEWIDE~~ SECURE SCHOOLS EMERGENCY RESPONSE GRANT PROGRAM ADMINISTERED BY THE CENTER.

(2) THE PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM IS TO PROVIDE GRANTS TO LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEMS TO IMPROVE THE SAFETY AND SECURITY OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE STATE BY IMPLEMENTING A STATEWIDE EMERGENCY

~~NOTIFICATION SYSTEM THAT FACILITATES SYSTEMS AND COMMUNICATION BETWEEN PUBLIC ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL PERSONNEL, A PUBLIC SAFETY ANSWERING POINT, AND A PUBLIC SAFETY AGENCY IN LIFE THREATENING AND EMERGENCY SITUATIONS, INCLUDING MEDICAL EMERGENCIES AND THE PRESENCE OF AN ACTIVE SHOOTER OR INTRUDER AT A PUBLIC SCHOOL DURING EMERGENCY EVENTS.~~

(3) A LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM AWARDED A GRANT BY THE CENTER UNDER THE PROGRAM SHALL USE THE FUNDS TO:

(I) IMPROVE EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION SYSTEMS; OR

(II) ENHANCE COMMUNICATIONS WITHIN THE SCHOOL AND WITH PUBLIC SAFETY AGENCIES.

(4) EACH COUNTY BOARD, IN CONSULTATION WITH LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AND A LOCAL PUBLIC SAFETY ANSWERING POINT, MAY APPLY TO THE CENTER FOR A GRANT UNDER THE PROGRAM.

~~(c) THE PROGRAM SHALL PROCURE AND IMPLEMENT AN EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION PLATFORM FOR A SECURE SCHOOLS EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROGRAM THROUGH WHICH ALL SCHOOL FACULTY AND STAFF ARE ABLE TO ALERT A PUBLIC SAFETY ANSWERING POINT TO REPORT A LIFE THREATENING OR AN EMERGENCY SITUATION.~~

~~(D) (C) THE COMMUNICATION PLATFORM REQUIRED UNDER SUBSECTION (C) OF THIS SECTION SHALL~~ AN EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION SYSTEM AND THE COMMUNICATIONS UNDER SUBSECTION (B)(3) OF THIS SECTION MAY INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

(1) A CELLULAR PHONE APPLICATION-BASED PANIC-BUTTON EMERGENCY EVENT SYSTEM THAT:

(I) CAN BE INTEGRATED WITH A LOCAL PUBLIC SAFETY ANSWERING POINT; AND

(II) IS ABLE TO:

1. PLACE A STANDARD TELEPHONE CALL TO 9-1-1;

2. TEXT COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN AUTHORIZED USERS AND A PUBLIC SAFETY ANSWERING POINT AND PUBLIC SAFETY AGENCY;

3. PROVIDE TEXT MESSAGES, E-MAILS, AND PUSH NOTIFICATIONS TO AUTHORIZED USERS, INCLUDING SCHOOL PERSONNEL, FIRST RESPONDERS, AND OTHER PUBLIC SAFETY AGENCY PERSONNEL; AND

4. AUTOMATICALLY TRANSMIT SCHOOL FLOOR PLANS, SCHOOL EMERGENCY PLANS, AND RELEVANT CONTACT INFORMATION TO FIRST RESPONDERS OR PUBLIC SAFETY AGENCY PERSONNEL RESPONDING TO A PANIC BUTTON EVENT AT A SCHOOL WITHOUT FURTHER ACTION NEEDED BY THE USER REPORTING THE EMERGENCY; ~~AND~~

(2) ~~CAPABILITY~~ THE CAPABILITY TO GENERATE AN AUTOMATED EMERGENCY ALERT NOTIFICATION TO ALL PUBLIC AND NONPUBLIC SCHOOLS LOCATED IN REASONABLE PROXIMITY TO AN EMERGENCY SITUATION THAT IS DETERMINED TO BE AN IMMINENT THREAT TO SCHOOL CAMPUSES OR SCHOOL PERSONNEL BY THE PUBLIC SAFETY ANSWERING POINT RECEIVING THE REPORT; ~~INCLUDING REPORTS OF:~~

~~(I) AN INDIVIDUAL WHO WAS KILLED;~~

~~(II) AN ACCIDENT OR THREAT THAT RESULTED IN SERIOUS BODILY INJURY;~~

~~(III) AN INDIVIDUAL WHO WAS ASSAULTED WITH A DEADLY WEAPON AND THE ALLEGED ASSAILANT REMAINS AT LARGE;~~

~~(IV) THE DISCHARGE OF A FIREARM; AND~~

~~(V) ANY OTHER EMERGENCY SITUATION AGREED TO BY A PUBLIC SAFETY AGENCY AND A COUNTY BOARD; AND~~

(3) INTERCOMS, SCHOOL PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEMS, BIDIRECTIONAL ANTENNAS OR BOOSTERS, AND OTHER TECHNOLOGY THAT WILL IMPROVE EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION AND COMMUNICATION, AS IDENTIFIED BY THE CENTER.

~~(E) THE COMMUNICATION PLATFORM PROCURED UNDER SUBSECTION (C) OF THIS SECTION SHALL BE CERTIFIED BY THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY UNDER THE FEDERAL SUPPORT ANTI-TERRORISM BY FOSTERING EFFECTIVE TECHNOLOGIES ACT.~~

~~(F) (D) (1) ON OR BEFORE SEPTEMBER 1, 2026, THE CENTER SHALL ENSURE THAT THE PROGRAM HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED IN EACH PUBLIC SCHOOL IN THE STATE.~~

~~(2) (I) A PUBLIC SCHOOL WITH AN EXISTING PROGRAM THAT IS SUBSTANTIALLY SIMILAR TO THE PROGRAM MAY SUBMIT A REQUEST TO THE CENTER TO OPT OUT OF THE PROGRAM.~~

~~(II) IF THE CENTER DETERMINES THAT A PUBLIC SCHOOL'S EXISTING PROGRAM IS SUBSTANTIALLY SIMILAR TO THE PROGRAM, THE CENTER SHALL GRANT THE SCHOOL'S REQUEST TO OPT OUT OF THE PROGRAM IS OPERATING AND AVAILABLE TO EACH COUNTY BOARD.~~

~~(C) (E) FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026, THE THE GOVERNOR SHALL MAY INCLUDE IN THE ANNUAL BUDGET BILL AN APPROPRIATION OF \$4,500,000 FOR THE PROGRAM.~~

Article – Public Safety

1–301.

(a) In this subtitle the following words have the meanings indicated.

(j) (1) “First responder” means an employee of a State or local public safety agency that provides emergency response services.

(2) “First responder” includes:

(i) a firefighter;

(ii) a paramedic;

(iii) an emergency medical technician;

(iv) a rescue squad member;

(v) a sworn member of the Office of the State Fire Marshal;

(vi) a member of a volunteer fire or rescue company who is a covered employee under § 9–234 of the Labor and Employment Article;

(vii) an individual who is licensed or certified under § 13–516 of the Education Article; and

(viii) a 9–1–1 specialist.

(t) “Public safety agency” means:

(1) a functional division of a public agency that provides fire fighting, police, medical, or other emergency services; or

(2) a private entity that provides fire fighting, police, medical, or other emergency services on a voluntary basis.

(u) “Public safety answering point” means a communications facility that:

(1) is operated on a 24-hour basis;

(2) first receives 9-1-1 requests for emergency services in a 9-1-1 service area; and

(3) as appropriate:

(i) dispatches public safety services directly;

(ii) transmits incident data to appropriate public safety agencies within the State for the dispatch of public safety services; or

(iii) transfers 9-1-1 requests for emergency services or transmits incident data to:

1. an appropriate federal emergency communication center responsible for the delivery of public safety services on a federal campus or federal reservation; or

2. an appropriate public safety answering point located within or outside the State.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July 1, 2024.

Approved by the Governor, April 25, 2024.