MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE REGULAR SESSION 2021

By: Representative Clarke

To: Education;
Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 732

AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-3-83, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO PROVIDE THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SHALL REQUIRE LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO CONDUCT REFRESHER TRAINING ON SAFETY PROTOCOL AND RESPONSE TO ACTIVE SHOOTER SITUATIONS FOR ALL SCHOOL EMPLOYEES AND PERSONNEL, INCLUDING ALL CAFETERIA WORKERS, CUSTODIANS, TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS EVERY THREE YEARS; TO REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND/OR SELECTION OF THE CONTENT OF THE TRAINING; TO REQUIRE SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO REPORT COMPLETION OF THE TRAINING TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION; TO REQUIRE THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO PROVIDE A SYSTEM OF VERIFICATION TO CROSS REFERENCE THE COMPLETION OF THE TRAINING REQUIREMENT FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO TRANSFER EMPLOYMENT BETWEEN SCHOOL DISTRICTS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

SECTION 1. Section 37-3-83, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

37-3-83. (1) There is established within the State Department of Education, using only existing staff and resources, a School Safety Grant Program, available to all eligible public school districts, to assist in financing programs to provide school safety. However, no monies from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families grant may be used for the School Safety Grant Program.

(2) The school board of each school district, with the assistance of the State Department of Education School Safety Center, shall adopt a comprehensive local school district school safety plan and shall update the plan on an annual basis.

(3) Subject to the extent of appropriations available, the School Safety Grant Program shall offer any of the following specific preventive services, and other additional services appropriate to the most current school district school safety plan:

(a) Metal detectors;

(b) Video surveillance cameras, communications equipment and monitoring equipment for classrooms, school buildings, school grounds and school buses;

(c) Crisis management/action teams responding to school violence;

(d) Violence prevention training, conflict resolution training, behavioral stress training and other appropriate training designated by the State Department of Education for faculty and staff; and

(e) School safety personnel.

(4) Each local school district of this state may annually apply for school safety grant funds subject to appropriations by the Legislature. School safety grants shall include a base grant amount plus an additional amount per student in average daily attendance in the school or school district. The base grant

amount and amount per student shall be determined by the State Board of Education, subject to specific appropriation therefor by the Legislature. In order to be eligible for such program, each local school board desiring to participate shall apply to the State Department of Education by May 31 before the beginning of the applicable fiscal year on forms provided by the department, and shall be required to establish a local School Safety Task Force to involve members of the community in the school safety effort. The State Department of Education shall determine by July 1 of each succeeding year which local school districts have submitted approved applications for school safety grants.

(5) As part of the School Safety Grant Program, the State Department of Education may conduct a pilot program to research the feasibility of using video camera equipment in the classroom to address the following:

(a) Determine if video cameras in the classroom reduce student disciplinary problems;

(b) Enable teachers to present clear and convincing evidence of a student's disruptive behavior to the student, the principal, the superintendent and the student's parents; and

(c) Enable teachers to review teaching performance and receive diagnostic feedback for developmental purposes.

(6) Any local school district may use audio/visual-monitoring equipment in classrooms, hallways,

buildings, grounds and buses for the purpose of monitoring school disciplinary problems.

(7) As a component of the comprehensive local school district school safety plan required under subsection (2) of this section, the school board of a school district may adopt and implement a policy addressing sexual abuse of children, to be known as "Erin's Law Awareness." Any policy adopted under this subsection may include or address, but need not be limited to, the following:

(a) Methods for increasing teacher, student and parental awareness of issues regarding sexual abuse of children, including knowledge of likely warning signs indicating that a child may be a victim of sexual abuse;

(b) Educational information for parents or guardians, which may be included in the school handbook, on the warning signs of a child being abused, along with any needed assistance, referral or resource information;

(c) Training for school personnel on child sexual abuse;

(d) Age-appropriate curriculum for students in prekindergarten through fifth grade;

(e) Actions that a child who is a victim of sexual abuse should take to obtain assistance and intervention;

(f) Counseling and resources available for students affected by sexual abuse; and

(g) Emotional and educational support for a child who has been abused to enable the child to be successful in school.

(8) As part of the school safety grant program, the State Department of Education shall establish three (3) pilot programs in six (6) school districts utilizing an evidence-based curriculum to provide students in Grades K-5 with skills to manage stress and anxiety in order for them to be better equipped to handle challenges in a healthy way and build resiliency. The Mississippi Department of Mental Health shall be responsible for the selection of the content of the evidence-based curriculum. The results of this pilot program shall be measured and reported, and such results shall be used in consideration of the implementation of this curriculum statewide.

(9) (a) As a component of the comprehensive local school district safety plan required under subsection (2) of this section, beginning in the 2019-2020 school year, the State Department of Education shall require local school districts to conduct, every two (2) years, refresher training on mental health and suicide prevention for all school employees and personnel, including all cafeteria workers, custodians, teachers and administrators. The Mississippi Department of Mental Health shall be responsible for the development and/or selection of the content of the training, which training shall be provided at no cost to school employees. School districts shall report completion of the training to the State Department of Education.

(b) The State Department of Education shall require local school districts to conduct, every three (3) years, refresher training on safety protocol and response to active shooter situations for all school employees and personnel, including all cafeteria workers, custodians, teachers and administrators. The Mississippi Department of Public Safety shall be responsible for the development and/or selection of the content of the training, which training shall be provided at no cost to school employees. School districts shall report completion of the training to the State Department of Education, which shall provide a system of verification for districts to cross reference the completion of the training requirement for individuals who transfer employment between school districts before the active shooter refresher training is required again.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2021.