

Committee on Education Pre-K -12

CS/CS/HB 1473 — School Safety

by Education & Employment Committee; Judiciary Committee; and Reps. Trabulsy, Hunschofsky, and others (CS/SB 1356 by Criminal Justice Committee and Senator Calatayud)

The bill modifies provisions related to the Chris Hixon, Coach Aaron Feis, and Coach Scott Beigel Guardian Program, which:

- Clarify that private schools seeking to participate in the guardian program are responsible for costs associated with background screening in addition to costs associated with training, but authorizes the sheriff providing the training to waive the costs.
- Provide that an individual certified and in good standing with the Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission is exempt from the required school guardian training.
- Change the 12-hour diversity training to training on de-escalating incidents.
- Implement new reporting requirements related to individuals certified as school guardians and serving as school guardians in school districts, charter schools, and private schools, with penalties for noncompliance.
- Require the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) to serve as the central repository of information regarding certified and appointed guardians.

The bill establishes new perimeter and door safety requirements with which school districts and charter school governing boards must comply by August 1, 2024. These include:

- Keeping routes of ingress and egress securely closed and locked when students are on campus, or actively staffed when open or unlocked.
- Requiring that violations of such perimeter and safety requirements be reported to the applicable school official or governing board.
- Requiring classrooms to be locked, or actively staffed, during class time, and for classrooms to have the safest part of the room marked.
- Requiring each school district to develop a progressive discipline policy for instructional and administrative personnel who knowingly violate school safety requirements.

The bill requires the Office of Safe Schools (OSS) to, by August 1, 2024, develop and adopt a Florida school safety compliance inspection report to document compliance with Florida school safety requirements. The OSS must also:

- Triennially conduct unannounced inspections of all public schools using the safety compliance inspection report, with associated reporting and acknowledgement requirements. The bill provides for a bonus program for school principals and charter school administrators whose schools are found to be in full compliance with school safety requirements.
- By December 1, 2024, evaluate the distribution methodology for the Safe Schools Allocation and, if necessary, make recommendations for an alternate methodology to distribute the remaining balance of the Safe Schools Allocation.

The bill provides for criminal penalties against a person who knowingly or willfully operates a drone over a Pre-K -12 public or private school or allows a drone to make contact with a school, with specified exceptions.

The bill requires public schools, including charter schools, within the first five days of school to provide age and developmentally appropriate instruction on the use or misuse of FortifyFL, the state mobile suspicious activity reporting tool.

Lastly, the bill creates, subject to appropriation, a grant program to be administered by the FDLE to support private schools' school safety efforts.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2024.

Vote: Senate 39-0; House 112-0