

By Senator Torres

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to student elopement; creating s.
3 1003.211, F.S.; providing definitions; requiring
4 public schools to create a School Staff Assistance for
5 Emergencies (SAFE) Team and a school elopement plan;
6 providing for membership and responsibilities of the
7 SAFE Team; providing requirements for the plan;
8 requiring the SAFE Team to create student-specific
9 elopement quick reference guides for certain students;
10 providing requirements for such guides; requiring
11 public schools to annually submit their plans to the
12 district school board; authorizing the State Board of
13 Education to adopt rules; providing an effective date.
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15 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:
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17 Section 1. Section 1003.211, Florida Statutes, is created
18 to read:

19 1003.211 School elopement plans.-

20 (1) For purposes of this section, the term:

21 (a) "Disability" means, for a student in kindergarten
22 through grade 12, an autism spectrum disorder, as defined in the
23 Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth
24 Edition, published by the American Psychiatric Association, or
25 an intellectual disability, as defined in s. 393.063.

26 (b) "Elopement" means when a student with disabilities
27 wanders away, walks away, runs away, escapes, or otherwise
28 leaves the supervision of school staff or leaves school grounds
29 unsupervised or unnoticed before the end of his or her scheduled

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30 school day.

31 (2) To ensure the safety of students with disabilities at
32 risk of elopement, each public school shall create a School
33 Staff Assistance for Emergencies (SAFE) Team and a school
34 elopement plan.

35 (3) The school principal and assistant principal shall
36 serve on the SAFE Team and the school principal shall appoint at
37 least five other members to serve on the team. The SAFE Team
38 shall:

39 (a) Create and annually update the school elopement plan
40 and respond to all elopements.

41 (b) Provide training to all school personnel to familiarize
42 such personnel with the school elopement plan and all necessary
43 procedures, including, but not limited to, the search grid
44 established pursuant to paragraph (4) (a) and any
45 responsibilities of such personnel if an elopement occurs.

46 (4) In developing the school elopement plan, the SAFE Team
47 must include all of the following:

48 (a) A search grid of the school campus and surrounding
49 areas. The search grid must include all bodies of water,
50 intersections, train tracks and stations, parks, playgrounds,
51 and other features that may present a greater risk for students
52 with disabilities at risk of elopement.

53 (b) Procedures for school personnel to notify school
54 administrators if a student with disabilities elopes and
55 procedures for school personnel to immediately begin searching
56 for the student. The procedures must specify that upon
57 notification of an elopement, the SAFE Team must notify the
58 school resource officer or school safety officer and local law

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59 enforcement.

60 (c) Procedures for a coordinated response to an elopement,
61 including, but not limited to, announcing a Code Gray, which
62 will alert all school personnel to the elopement, and
63 immediately contacting the student's parent.

64 (d) The names, positions, and contact information for all
65 members of the SAFE Team.

66 (e) Other information or procedures that the SAFE Team,
67 district school board, or State Board of Education deems
68 necessary.

69 (5) (a) If a student with disabilities is prone to
70 elopement, the SAFE Team, in coordination with the student's
71 parent, must create a student-specific elopement quick reference
72 guide. The elopement quick reference guide must include all of
73 the following:

74 1. The student's identifying information.

75 2. A current photograph of the student.

76 3. The student's level of communication.

77 4. A list of the student's interests, behaviors,
78 preferences, and aversions.

79 5. Any health considerations for the student.

80 6. A list of any GPS technology that could be used to help
81 locate the student.

82 7. A list of possible locations where the student may go
83 within the search grid.

84 (b) The SAFE Team must distribute a student's elopement
85 quick reference guide to the student's parent and all relevant
86 school personnel.

87 (6) Each public school must annually provide its elopement

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88 plan to the district school board.

89 (7) The state board may adopt rules to administer this
90 section.

91 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2024.