

By Senator Arrington

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A bill to be entitled
An act relating to student elopement; creating s.
1003.211, F.S.; defining terms; requiring public
schools to create a School Staff Assistance for
Emergencies (SAFE) Team and a school elopement plan;
providing requirements for the plan; providing for
membership and responsibilities of the SAFE Team;
requiring the SAFE Team to create student-specific
elopement quick reference guides for certain students;
providing requirements for such guides; requiring
public schools to annually submit their plans to the
district school board; authorizing the State Board of
Education to adopt rules; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Section 1003.211, Florida Statutes, is created
to read:

1003.211 School elopement plans.—

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

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

(b)1. "Elopement" means when a student with autism spectrum
disorder or other disability leaves a safe or designated area,
the supervision of school staff, or school grounds without
authorization or awareness of potential risk, and such student

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has a documented history of doing so.

2. Elopement may include wandering, walking away, running away, or otherwise departing an assigned location unsupervised or unnoticed, only when the behavior is connected to the student's disability-related needs and poses a safety concern.

3. Elopement does not include intentional class-skipping or other non-disability-related absences.

(2) To ensure the safety of students with disabilities at risk of elopement, each public school shall create a School Staff Assistance for Emergencies (SAFE) Team and a school elopement plan. The plan must include procedures for immediately contacting the parent or guardian of a student with disabilities if the student elopes. The plan must include procedures for conducting an immediate, coordinated on-campus search and contacting emergency services only when the student is reasonably believed, based on verified information or direct observation, to have left school grounds and to be at risk of harm.

(3) The school principal and an assistant principal shall serve on the SAFE Team, and the school principal shall appoint at least three other school members, including the school resource officer, to serve on the team. The SAFE Team shall do all of the following:

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

(b) Provide training to all school personnel to familiarize such personnel with the school elopement plan and all necessary procedures.

(4) (a) If a student with disabilities is prone to

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59 elopement, the SAFE Team, in coordination with the student's
60 parent or guardian, must create a student-specific elopement
61 quick reference guide. The elopement quick reference guide must
62 include all of the following:

- 63 1. The student's identifying information.
- 64 2. A current photograph of the student.
- 65 3. The student's level of communication.
- 66 4. A list of the student's interests, behaviors,
67 preferences, and aversions.
- 68 5. Any health considerations for the student.
- 69 6. A list of any GPS technology that could be used to help
70 locate the student.
- 71 7. A list of possible locations where the student may go
72 when eloping.
- 73 (b) The SAFE Team must distribute a student's elopement
74 quick reference guide to the student's parent and all relevant
75 school personnel.
- 76 (5) Each public school must annually provide its elopement
77 plan to the district school board.
- 78 (6) The state board may adopt rules to administer this
79 section.

80 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.