MEMORANDUM

TO: School District Superintendents

FROM: Jacob Oliva

DATE: September 2, 2022

SUBJECT: House Bill 1421, School Safety

The 2022 Legislature passed, and Governor DeSantis signed into law House Bill 1421, which became effective on July 1, 2022. The bill includes school safety and security requirements recommended by the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Commission (MSD Commission). The purpose of this memorandum is to inform school districts of these changes related to school safety, including:

- Consequences for anyone knowingly submitting false tips through the mobile suspicious activity reporting tool, known as FortifyFL;
- Requirement that specified law enforcement officers be physically present and directly involved in active assailant emergency drills, and that school districts must notify such law enforcement officers no less than 24 hours in advance of such drills;
- Requirement for Office of Safe Schools (OSS) to develop a model family reunification plan that guides family reunification when K-12 public schools are closed or unexpectedly evacuated due to natural or manmade disasters, and a requirement for district school boards and charter school governing boards to adopt family reunification plans and to update and review those plans;
- Requirement that all members of threat assessment teams be involved in the threat assessment processes and decisions;
- Requirement that school districts and local mobile response teams use the same suicide screening tool approved by the Florida Department of Education (FDOE);
- Authorization for safe-school officers (such as school district police officers) to make arrests on property owned or leased by a charter school under a charter contract;
- Requirement for safe-school officers that are sworn law enforcement officers to complete mental health crisis intervention training;
- Requirement for safe-school officers that are not sworn law enforcement officers to receive training on incident response and de-escalation;
• Requirement for candidates seeking participation in the Coach Aaron Feis Guardian program training to first satisfy the background screening, psychological evaluation, and drug test requirements, and be approved by the sheriff;
• Requirement for district school superintendents, charter school administrators, or their designees to notify county sheriffs and OSS of certain safe-school officer-related incidents;
• Requirement for school districts to annually certify, beginning July 1, 2023, that at least 80 percent of school personnel received the mandatory youth mental health awareness training;
• Requirement that OSS maintain a directory of public school diversion programs;
• Requirement include charter school personnel in ongoing OSS professional development opportunities;
• Requirement for the State Board of Education to adopt rules setting requirements for emergency drills including timing, frequency, participation, training, notification, and accommodations;
• Requirement for FDOE to annually publish school safety and environmental incident reporting data in a uniform, statewide format that is easy to read and understand;
• Extension of the MSD Commission’s term until July 1, 2026, for the purpose of monitoring implementation of school safety legislation, as well as other duties; and
• Requirement that the Commissioner of Education to oversee and enforce school safety and security compliance in the state.

The Department has begun implementation and will initiate rulemaking later this year; more details will be forthcoming.

If you have questions, contact the Office of Safe Schools at SafeSchools@fldoe.org.

JO/jc

cc: School District School Safety Specialists
    School District Exceptional Student Education Directors
    School District Student Services Directors