

THE POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE AND SCHOOL SAFETY BILL

MODEL LEGISLATION OVERVIEW AND FAQ

Section 1: Findings

This section provides background as to why the proposals outlined in the legislation are needed, including:

- Students have the right to attend a school free from bullying, discrimination, harassment, aggression, violence, and abuse.
- School personnel have the right to work in a safe environment and should be provided with the training, resources, and support to help maintain safe and supportive school environments for students.
- Comprehensive school safety efforts must balance physical and psychological safety.
- *Be sure to fill in any available data on the shortages of school instructional support personnel in your state.*

Section 2: Purposes

This section describes possible purposes of the bill. You are encouraged to pick the description that would work best given the typical format of bills in your state legislature:

- **Option 1:**
 - To ensure schools develop comprehensive, culturally competent, and evidence-based school safety and crisis response plans designed, implemented, and evaluated by a multidisciplinary team of school professionals
- **Option 2:**
 - To ensure schools develop comprehensive, culturally competent, and evidence-based school safety and crisis response plans designed, implemented, and evaluated by a multidisciplinary team of school professionals that includes evidence-based:
 - Protocols and processes for suicide risk assessment
 - Protocols and processes for threat assessment
 - Training and professional development in school safety and crisis preparedness and response
 - Comprehensive school mental and behavioral health systems that include wellness, prevention, early identification and intervention, and targeted intervention for students at risk
 - To ensure the state allocates sufficient resources to support schools developing school safety and crisis plans, provides technical assistance to districts, and reports on the progress of their plans

Section 3: Minimum Standards

This section is the meat of the legislation—the regulations, requirements, and funding that will be enacted once the bill is signed into law

- Regulations
 - Require an entity of the state to establish minimum standards for schools to develop comprehensive, culturally responsive, evidence-based school climate and school safety plans designed, implemented, and evaluated by a multidisciplinary team of school professionals.
 - Require an entity of the state to establish a Safe School Information and Best Practices Clearinghouse of effective school safety and crisis preparedness strategies for districts and schools.

- Require an entity of the state to regularly report on the progress of schools in developing their school safety and crisis response plans.
- Funding
 - Provides a funding level to be allocated to districts to meet the requirements in the bill.
 - Gives a maximum threshold of authorized funds can be used to purchase physical security equipment.
- Requirements
 - Require each school to:
 - Convene a multidisciplinary team of school professionals to develop their school safety and crisis response plan, and to outline specific components the plan must include (e.g., suicide risk assessment and threat assessment and management protocols).
 - Develop an ongoing training and professional development plan for the multidisciplinary team, other relevant school staff, and students as necessary.
 - Have access to technical assistance from the state.
 - Comply with reporting requirements.
 - Suggest that schools may also use funds to:
 - Implement a comprehensive school mental and behavioral health system.
 - Develop a plan to recruit, hire, and train more school employed mental health professionals.
 - Amend, revise, or update an existing school safety or crisis response plan to meet the previously outlined requirements.
 - Require the state to make efforts to ensure an adequate level of school employed mental health professionals to schools across the state.
 - Prohibit anyone besides a commissioned and trained school resource officer employed by the school to possess a firearm.
 - Prohibit school resource officers from development, implementation, or enforcement of school discipline policies and practices.

Section 4: Accountability

This section requires the state to verify if schools are in compliance with the requirements of the law each year and requires districts to provide technical assistance for any school not in compliance within a certain time period.

Section 5: Definitions

This section defines key words and terms used throughout the bill. This is important for interpretation purposes for those who implement the law, if enacted. Definitions used in the bill only apply to the programs created by this legislation, unless explicitly stated.

Frequently Asked Questions

Question: Some of the regulations outlined in this legislation are not pertinent to the context of school safety in our state. Can we omit these strategies when we present this bill to interested legislators?

Answer: Yes. This model legislation can be modified and is intended to be flexible to meet the needs of your state.

Question: My state association needs assistance in learning how to introduce a bill and navigate the legislative process. Can NASP offer support?

Answer: Yes! NASP staff and members of the Government and Professional Relations (GPR) Committee are available to provide you with assistance and consultation. Please contact Nate von der Embse (natevonderembse@gmail.com), Chair, GPR Committee or Kelly Vaillancourt Strobach (kvaillancourt@naspweb.org), NASP Director of Policy and Advocacy. They can connect you with someone who can offer assistance.