

SESSION OF 2025

**SUPPLEMENTAL NOTE ON SENATE BILL NO. 263**

As Amended by Senate Committee on  
Education

**Brief\***

SB 263, as amended, would create the Student Safe at School Act to establish standards and requirements for active shooters drills, active shooter simulations, and violence prevention training conducted by elementary and secondary schools. The bill would also amend the requirement that the State Fire Marshal adopt rules and regulations concerning crisis drills at public and private schools.

***Definitions (New Section 1)***

The bill would define the following terms:

- “Active shooter drill” would mean an emergency preparedness drill designed to inform and instruct students, teachers, school personnel, and other school staff on how to respond in the event that an armed intruder is on the campus or an armed assailant is in the immediate vicinity of the school. This includes practice active shooter drills, but does not include any sensory components, activities, or elements that mimic a real-life shooting, nor is it an active shooter simulation;
- “Active shooter simulation” would mean an emergency exercise including full-scale or functional exercises, designed to inform and instruct adult teachers, school personnel, and other

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\*Supplemental notes are prepared by the Legislative Research Department and do not express legislative intent. The supplemental note and fiscal note for this bill may be accessed on the Internet at <https://klrd.gov/>

school staff on how to respond in the event of an armed intruder on the school campus or an armed assailant in the immediate vicinity of the school. This includes activities or elements mimicking a real-life shooting, including, but not limited to, simulation of tactical response by law enforcement. This does not include active shooter drills;

- “Department” would mean the State Department of Education;
- “Evidence-based” would mean a program or practice that demonstrates:
  - A statistically significant effect based on:
    - Strong evidence from not fewer than one well-designed and well-implemented experimental study;
    - Moderate evidence from no fewer than one well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental study; or
    - Promising evidence from no fewer than one well-designed and well-implemented correlational study with statistical controls for selective bias; or
  - A rationale based on high-quality research finding or positive evaluations that the program or practice is likely to improve relevant outcomes and includes ongoing efforts to examine the effects of the program or practice;
  - “Parent” and “person acting as parent” would mean the same as defined in KSA 72-3127, and amendments thereto;
- “School” would mean any elementary or secondary public school maintained and operated by a school district and any accredited non-public school that

provides any of the grades kindergarten through twelve; and

- “Vendor” would include not-for-profit entities, for-profit entities, and public agencies.

### ***Active Shooter Drills (New Section 2)***

#### ***Standards for Active Shooter Drills***

The bill would require each active shooter drill undertaken at a school to meet the following standards:

- Be accessible;
- Be developmentally and age appropriate, including appropriate safety vocabulary and verbiage;
- Be culturally-aware;
- Be trauma-informed; and
- Be inclusive of accommodations for students with any mobility needs, sensory needs, developmental or physical disabilities, mental health needs, and auditory or visual limitations.

The bill would not require student participation in an active shooter drill that does not meet the above described standards.

#### ***Conducting Active Shooter Drills***

The bill would prohibit an active shooter drill from being conducted consecutively or concurrently with another crisis or emergency preparedness drill. The bill would also require active shooter drills to be announced as a practice prior to the commencement of the drill in a manner that is concise, age

appropriate, and that informs the students that there is no immediate danger to their life and safety.

**Notice and alternative safety education.** The bill would require schools to notify each parent or person acting as a parent at least 24 hours prior to an active shooter drill. If such notice cannot be provided, the bill would require notice to be provided within 24 hours after the drill occurs.

The bill would require the notice to provide a parent the option to exempt a student from participation in such drill. The bill would require any student who is exempted to have the opportunity to participate in alternative safety education, and the bill would prohibit exempted students from receiving any negative or punitive treatment for not participating.

The bill would require the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) to establish criteria for alternative safety education for students who do not participate in active shooter drills. This criteria would include essential safety instruction and training that is appropriate for students with mobility restrictions, sensory needs, developmental or physical disabilities, mental health needs, and auditory or visual limitations.

**Debriefing.** The bill would require active shooter protocols to include a reasonable amount of time immediately following the drill, and before regular classroom activity resumes, for teachers to debrief with students. The bill would also require students who participate in an active shooter drill to have access to on-site mental health services including, but not limited to, access to school psychologists, counselors, and social workers.

*Review by Board of Education or Governing Body*

The bill would require each local board of education and governing body of a non-public school to review:

- Efficacy and effect of active shooter drills and practice active shooter drills; and
- Impact of active shooter drills on the safety and mental health of students, teachers, and other school personnel and staff.

### *Vendors*

The bill would require KSDE to publish on its website a list of vendors who teach school personnel and staff, including safety officers, on how to conduct active shooter drills. This list would include the name and website of the vendor and would be updated by KSDE at least every two years.

### *Guidelines for Measuring Effectiveness*

The bill would require that KSDE partner with the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) to create guidelines for measuring the effectiveness of active shooter drills. These guidelines should be provided to every school that conducts an active shooter drill and also be made available to the public.

### ***Participation in Active Shooter Simulations (New Section 3)***

This bill would state that no student, teacher, school personnel, or other school staff would be required to participate in an active shooter simulation.

The bill would specify that no active shooter simulations would occur during regular school hours, while students are present or expected to be present at school.

The bill would allow parents of students in grades 9 through 12 to opt their student into participation in an active

shooter simulation by providing a written notice to the school. This notice should state that the student has parental permission to participate in active shooter simulations.

***Evidence-based Violence Prevention Training (New Section 4)***

The bill would require that every school provide students in grades 6 through 12 at least one hour or one standard class period of evidence-based violence training annually. The training would be required to teach students:

- How to identify observable warning signs and signals of someone who may be at risk of harming themselves or others;
- The importance of taking threats seriously and seeking help; and
- The steps to take to report dangerous, violent, threatening, harmful, or potentially harmful activity.

The bill would require that KSDE develop and publish a list of evidence-based training options that schools could use to fulfill the requirements listed above on or before October 1, 2026. This list would include any available, no-cost programming and would be updated at least once every two years. The bill would permit schools to use any evidence-based violence prevention training, regardless of whether it meets the requirements listed from KSDE.

***Safety Planning (New Section 5)***

The bill would require that each local board of education and non-public school governing body ensure that students have the opportunity to contribute to the students' school's safety and violence-prevention planning. These opportunities would include the recommendations of the Federal

Emergency Management Agency's multi-hazard planning for schools, which includes providing:

- Student opportunities for prevention safety leadership roles;
- Encouragement and support to students in establishing clubs and programs focused on safety; and
- The opportunity for students to learn about and seek help from adults regarding prevention for bullying, sexual harassment, sexual assault, and suicide.

### ***State Fire Marshal Rules and Regulations (Section 6)***

The bill would define "crisis drills" in continuing law to include intruder response drills, lockdown drills, and active shooter drills. The bill would also require any public or private school that conducts an active shooter drill to conduct such drill in accordance with the provisions of the bill.

[*Note:* The State Fire Marshal is required to adopt reasonable rules and regulations to safeguard life and property from fire, explosion, and hazardous materials and includes requiring public and private K-12 schools and educational institutions to conduct at least three crisis drills each school year and during school hours. The manner in which crisis drills are conducted is subject to approval by the Safe and Secure Schools Unit of KSDE.]

### **Background**

The bill was introduced by the Senate Committee on Federal and State Affairs at the request of Senator Thomas.

### ***Senate Committee on Education***

In the Senate Committee, **proponent** testimony was provided by a representative of the Sandy Hook Promise. The proponent stated that the bill would allow for evidence-based violence prevention practices in the classroom, with students' mental health and well-being in mind.

Neutral testimony was provided by representatives of Kansas Association of School Boards, Kansas National Education Association, United School Administrators, and a private citizen who identified as an elementary school teacher. The conferees generally stated that the topics in this bill should be worked on between local school boards and the Legislature. The representatives supported the mission of the bill but were concerned with local control and individual school choice on safety.

Written-only neutral testimony was provided by representatives of Olathe Public Schools and State Fire Marshal.

Written-only opponent testimony was provided by a representative from Wichita Public Schools.

No other testimony was provided.

The Senate Committee amended the bill to include teachers, school personnel, and other school staff to be able to opt-out of a school shooter simulation.

### **Fiscal Information**

According to the fiscal note prepared by the Division of the Budget on the bill, as introduced, KSDE, KDHE, and the State Fire Marshal indicate that enactment of the bill would have no fiscal effect on state expenditures. There may be costs to school districts to implement requirements of the bill,



including required trainings; however, a fiscal effect cannot be estimated.

Education; Students Safe At School Act; safe and secure schools; Kansas State Department of Education; crisis drills; State Fire Marshal