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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2024

A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- SCHOOL EMERGENCY DRILLS ACT

Introduced By: Representatives Boylan, McNamara, Stewart, Donovan, Kislak, Carson,
Cotter, Caldwell, Casimiro, and Tanzi

Date Introduced: March 27, 2024

Referred To: House Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 16 of the General Laws entitled "EDUCATION" is hereby amended by
2 adding thereto the following chapter:

3 CHAPTER 21.8

4 SCHOOL EMERGENCY DRILLS ACT

5 **16-21.8-1. Short title.**

6 This chapter shall be known and may be cited as the "School Emergency Drills Act."

7 **16-21.8-2. Definitions.**

8 As used in this chapter:

9 (1) "Active shooter simulation" means any imitation of a school shooting situation that
10 depicts events using authentic or simulated items including, but not limited to, authentic or
11 simulated weapons, gunfire, imaginary fatalities or simulated blood or casualties.

12 (2) "Crisis response drill" or "CRD" means an operations-based exercise that involves
13 school staff and students practicing or rehearsing the response to specific emergency conditions.

14 (3) "Crisis response event" means and unplanned event that involves a threat or critical
15 incident necessitating a school lock down or an emergency school evacuation.

16 (4) "Emergency drills" means drills that are designed to provide practice and instruction to
17 students and staff to remain safe. These include, but are not limited to, fire drills, crisis response
18 drills, and evacuation drills.

19 (5) "Evacuation drills" means drills that move students and staff from one place to another

1 and are designed and conducted to practice for situations where the primary objective is to ensure
2 that students and staff can quickly move away from the threat and where conditions outside the
3 school building are safer than conditions inside the school building, necessitating that students
4 evacuate the building and/or move farther from the school building than the distance required
5 during a fire drill.

6 (6) "Fire drill" means drills that move students and staff from one place to another and are
7 designed and conducted to practice for situations where the primary objective is to ensure that
8 students and staff can quickly move away from the threat and where conditions outside the school
9 building are safer than conditions inside the school building.

10 (7) "Trauma-informed" refers to trauma-informed practices that are consistent with the
11 requirements of this chapter, and including, but not limited to, the requirements of §§ 16-21-40 and
12 16-21-41.

13 **16-21.8-3. Fire, evacuation and CRD drills -- Master schedule.**

14 (a) Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, the following schedule shall
15 be followed for all fire, evacuation and crisis response drills.

16 (1) There shall be six (6) fire drills conducted only during September, October, November,
17 March, April and May. At least two (2) out of the six (6) fire drills shall be obstructed by means of
18 which at least one or more exits and stairways in the school building are blocked off or not used;

19 (2) There shall be one CRD training for school staff in August or September, preferably
20 before the commencement of the school year;

21 (3) There shall be one CRD training for students in grades six (6) through twelve (12) in
22 October; and

23 (4) There shall be one CRD for all students to be held in January.

24 (b) Notwithstanding subsection (a) of this section, an administrator may, in the
25 administrator's discretion, replace one fire drill with an evacuation drill. In addition, an
26 administrator may, in collaboration with the local fire department, elect to incorporate emergency
27 procedures for responding to explosive hazards in the school such as a bomb threat or gas leak,
28 which hazard necessitates moving students farther from the school than the students would do for
29 a fire drill, in one of the fire drills conducted in September, October, November, March, April, or
30 May.

31 **16-21.8-4. Crisis response drills -- Required training for staff.**

32 (a) Effective August 1, 2025, and annually thereafter, training shall be required for crisis
33 response drills ("CRD") for all school department staff at any public school or private school grades
34 K through twelve (K-12) having more than twenty-five (25) pupils. Training pursuant to this section

1 shall be limited to sixty (60) minutes in length and shall be conducted in consultation with the
2 Rhode Island state police basic school safety committee established pursuant to § 16-21-23.

3 (b) Staff training. In August or September of any school year, in collaboration with local
4 first responders, including any police and fire department and prior to any CRD training involving
5 students, school personnel shall annually receive, at a minimum, instruction and briefing by school
6 administrators and public safety personnel regarding the procedure and content of CRD training.
7 The instruction and briefing shall be conducted outside the presence of any students, and teachers
8 and staff shall be provided with an opportunity to ask questions and provide input for use in the
9 CRD training. The instruction and briefing session required by this chapter shall be conducted
10 within the school or school districts contractual work year and may coincide with other
11 professional development training. Provided, however, no teacher or staff member shall be required
12 to attend training sessions outside the normal workday and work year.

13 (c) CRD training shall be conducted in order that all school personnel shall participate in
14 CRD training.

15 (d) This training shall:

16 (1) Be held in conjunction with local first responders;

17 (2) Utilize trauma-informed practices;

18 (3) Include training on lockdown procedures as well as an evacuation option, including
19 how to determine if and when, and where to go;

20 (4) Include all staff as participants including, but not limited to, teachers, administrators,
21 support staff, substitutes, and custodians; and

22 (5) Incorporate recommendations and best practices as adapted to the particular needs of
23 the schools, from the Rhode Island school safety committee established pursuant to § 16-21-23.

24 **16-21.8-5. Crisis response drills -- Required training and drills for students.**

25 (a) Effective August 1, 2025, and annually thereafter during the month of October, students
26 in grades six (6) through twelve (12) shall be required to participate in crisis response training. This
27 training shall include both discussion of, and training for students on crisis response. This training
28 shall provide students with information on what to do in case of a threat inside the building and
29 shall include discussion of the differences between lockdown procedures as opposed to evacuation
30 procedures. The Rhode Island state police basic school safety committee shall provide guidelines
31 to the schools or school districts on the required content of the crisis response training and drills.

32 (b) Effective August 1, 2025, and annually thereafter during the month of January, students
33 in grades kindergarten through twelve (K-12) shall be required to participate in a CRD. This drill
34 shall prepare students for a crisis response in case of a threat inside the building and shall be held

1 in conjunction with local first responders whenever possible.

2 (c) All crisis response training and CRDs required under this chapter shall be age
3 appropriate and utilize and integrate trauma-informed practices. In so doing, the ages of the students
4 serviced in the school shall be considered and given substantial weight in deciding how to conduct
5 the training and drills. Consideration shall also be given to students with special needs or a history
6 of trauma, and special accommodations shall be instituted and prepared for these students. In
7 addition, the provisions of §§ 16-21.8-6 and 16-21.8-7 shall be incorporated into the CRD.

8 **16-21.8-6. Crisis response training and CRD required elements.**

9 (a) The crisis response training and CRDs shall require the on-site participation of the local
10 law enforcement agency except where participation is determined by the chief of police to be
11 impractical. If a mutually agreeable date cannot be reached between the school administrator and
12 the appropriate local law enforcement agency, or if other public safety considerations prevent on-
13 site law enforcement participation, then the school may still hold the crisis response training or
14 CRD without participation from the law enforcement agency.

15 (b) Upon the participation of a local law enforcement agency in a crisis response training
16 or CRD, the appropriate local law enforcement official shall certify that the crisis response training
17 or CRD was conducted and notify the school in a timely manner of any deficiencies noted during
18 the drill.

19 (c) Neither the crisis response training nor CRD shall include simulations that mimic an
20 actual school shooting incident or active shooter event.

21 (d) All crisis response training and CRDs shall be announced in advance to all school
22 personnel and students immediately prior to the commencement of the drill.

23 (e) The crisis response training and CRD content shall be age appropriate and
24 developmentally appropriate.

25 (f) The crisis response training and CRDs shall include and involve all school personnel,
26 including school-based mental health professionals as well as substitute teachers.

27 (g) The crisis response training and CRDs shall include trauma-informed approaches to
28 address the concerns and well-being of students and school personnel.

29 (h) Schools shall provide alternative safety education and instruction related to a crisis
30 incident to students who do not participate in the CRD to provide them with essential information,
31 training, and instruction through less sensorial safety training methods pursuant to the provisions
32 of § 16-21.8-7.

33 (i) During the crisis response training and CRD, students shall be allowed to ask questions
34 related to the training or drill.

1 **16-21.8-7. Accommodations.**

2 (a) School administrators and school support personnel may, in their discretion, exempt a
3 student or students from participating in a CRD. When deciding whether to exempt a student from
4 participating in a CRD, the administrator and school support personnel may include the student's
5 individualized education program team or federal Section 504 plan team in the decision to exempt
6 the student from participating. School administrators and school support personnel shall not be
7 personally liable for any decision to provide accommodations to a student under this subsection.

8 (b) The school administration must ensure the availability of alternative safety education
9 for students who are exempt from participating or otherwise exempted from a CRD. Alternative
10 safety education must provide essential safety instruction through less sensorial safety training
11 methods and must be appropriate for students with mobility restrictions, sensory needs,
12 developmental or physical disabilities, mental health needs, and auditory or visual limitations.

13 (c) If a student is exempt from participating in a CRD, no negative consequence shall
14 impact the student's general school attendance record nor may nonparticipation alone make a
15 student ineligible to participate in or attend in school or after school activities.

16 **16-21.8-8. Active shooter simulation.**

17 Students, teachers, and staff are prohibited from being required to participate in active
18 shooter simulations. Law enforcement personnel may choose to run an active shooter simulation,
19 including simulated gun fire drills; provided that, the drill is scheduled only on days when students
20 are not present.

21 **16-21.8-9. Parental notification of emergency drills.**

22 Each September, at the commencement of the school year, schools shall provide parents or
23 guardians with a written notification containing an overview of all fire, evacuation and crisis
24 response training and CRDs together with a description of each drill and its components.
25 Furthermore, any school or school district shall, prior to the commencement of any crisis response
26 training or CRD, provide notice, within forty-eight (48) hours of any such training or drill, to
27 parents or guardians of students as well as staff members when appropriate. Furthermore, following
28 any crisis response training or CRD, parents or guardians shall be notified that such training or drill
29 took place. Parents or guardians shall also be provided with information on best practices for
30 educating students on CRDs and advice for parents and guardians on how to talk to their children
31 about the necessity and benefits of CRDs.

32 **16-21.8-10. Designated unification locations.**

33 Each September, at the commencement of the school year, schools shall provide parents
34 and/or guardians with notice of any designated unification points where students, staff and parents

1 [are directed to go in the event of an emergency.](#)

2 **16-21.8-11. Debriefing after actual crisis response events.**

3 [Schools and school districts shall develop and implement a debriefing plan to be utilized](#)
4 [after an actual crisis response event for each school. The plan shall include best practices and](#)
5 [procedures as provided by the Rhode Island state police, municipal law enforcement, and school](#)
6 [mental health professionals and shall be conducted within a timeframe that is as expeditious as](#)
7 [possible following an actual crisis response event and if possible the debriefing shall take place on](#)
8 [the same day as the actual crisis response event and if not on the same day then the debriefing shall](#)
9 [take place on the next school day. School staff and students shall be given an opportunity for](#)
10 [debriefing in conjunction with school mental health professionals and provided, further, school](#)
11 [administrators shall be required to debrief with local emergency responders.](#)

12 SECTION 2. Sections 16-21-4, 16-21-5, 16-21-24, 16-21-40 and 16-21-41 of the General
13 Laws in Chapter 16-21 entitled "Health and Safety of Pupils" are hereby amended to read as
14 follows:

15 **~~16-21-4. Fire, evacuation and lockdown drills required — Failure to comply~~ Fire,**
16 **evacuation and CRD drills required — Failure to comply.**

17 (a) It shall be the duty of the principal or other person in charge of every public school or
18 private school, college, university, or postsecondary institutions or educational institution within
19 the state, having more than twenty-five (25) pupils, to instruct and train the pupils by means of
20 drills, so that they may in a sudden emergency be able to leave school buildings and dormitories in
21 the shortest possible time and without confusion or panic.

22 (1) Notwithstanding other provisions of this section, in all schools or buildings used for
23 educational purposes through the twelfth grade by six (6) or more persons for four (4) or more
24 hours per day or more than twelve (12) hours per week, there shall be ~~not less than one emergency~~
25 ~~egress drill conducted every month the facility is in session with all occupants of the building~~
26 ~~participating in said drill. One additional emergency egress drill shall be conducted in buildings~~
27 ~~that are not open on a year-round basis within the first (1st) thirty (30) days of operation. At least~~
28 ~~one out of every four (4) emergency egress drills or rapid dismissals shall be obstructed by means~~
29 ~~of which at least one or more exits and stairways in the school building are blocked off or not used.~~
30 ~~In addition, there shall be two (2) evacuation drills and two (2) lockdown drills. Evacuation drills~~
31 ~~shall be designed and conducted for use when conditions outside the school building are safer than~~
32 ~~conditions inside the building. Lockdown drills shall be designed and conducted for use to protect~~
33 ~~school building occupants from potential dangers in the building, and one shall be held in~~
34 ~~September and one in January, and in conjunction with the local police whenever possible.~~

1 [emergency drills held in accordance with the schedule provided in § 16-21.8-3.](#)

2 (b)(1) In colleges, universities, postsecondary institutions, and residence facilities in public
3 schools or private schools there shall be at least four (4) drills or rapid dismissals during the
4 academic year for each school building or residence facility, at least two (2) of which shall be held
5 between the months of September through December. The remaining two (2) drills shall be held
6 between the months of January through June. Any college, university, or postsecondary institution
7 that holds a summer session shall hold a drill or rapid dismissal during the first full week of the
8 summer session.

9 (2) At least one drill or rapid dismissal shall be obstructed so that at least one or more exits
10 or stairways in the school building or dormitory are blocked off or not used.

11 (c) For purposes of this section “residence facility” means dormitory, fraternity, sorority,
12 or any other type of residence hall, whether on campus or off campus, owned or leased by a college,
13 university, postsecondary institutions, public schools, or private school with accommodations for
14 twenty (20) or more students.

15 (d) Notwithstanding other provisions of this section, fire drills shall be required in colleges
16 or universities only for buildings which are used for a residence facility.

17 (e) Neglect by any principal or any person in charge of any public or private school or
18 educational institution to comply with the provisions of this section shall be a misdemeanor
19 punishable by a fine not exceeding five hundred dollars (\$500).

20 (f) Written reports, on forms supplied by the department of elementary and secondary
21 education, of each fire drill shall be completed immediately upon termination of every drill and
22 shall be available for review by the fire marshal, assistant deputy fire marshal, or local fire
23 authority. The fire marshal, assistant deputy fire marshal, or local fire authority may require that a
24 fire drill be conducted in his or her presence.

25 **16-21-5. Uniform fire code or drill tactics — Reports.**

26 (a) It shall be the duty of the department of elementary and secondary education or the
27 office of higher education, as appropriate, to formulate a uniform fire code or drill tactics to be used
28 in all schools in accordance with § 16-21-4 [and chapter 21.8 of title 16](#) and to furnish a sufficient
29 number of copies for use in all schools together with forms [or other reporting procedures authorized](#)
30 [by the departments including, but not limited to, the use of an online portal](#) for reporting to the fire
31 department of the city or town in which the schools are located and to the department or office.
32 [Drill tactics shall be prepared for and to address all types of emergency drills.](#) These forms shall be
33 furnished by the department or office to all schools and shall be substantially as follows:

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- 1 Name of school
- 2 Principal or person in charge
- 3 Date drill is held day of week time alarm sounded..... a.m. p.m.
- 4 Time taken to empty building minutes seconds
- 5 Total time elapsed before school work is resumed minutes seconds
- 6 Type of drill check one [fire drill](#) obstructed [fire drill](#) unobstructed
- 7 [Crisis response drill -- staff training](#)
- 8 [Crisis response drill -- grades 6-12 training.....](#)
- 9 [Crisis response drill -- all students.....](#)
- 10 Signal used
- 11 Number of fire alarm button or station used
- 12 Name of person sounding alarm
- 13 Weather conditions
- 14 Temperature
- 15 Remarks

16 (b) In the case of colleges, universities, and postsecondary institutions, these reports shall
 17 remain on the premises available for review by fire officials.

18 **16-21-24. Requirements of school safety plans, school emergency response plans, and**
 19 **school crisis response plans.**

20 (a) School safety plans, as required by this chapter, shall address, but not to be limited to,
 21 prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. The school safety plans shall include,
 22 at a minimum, the following policies and procedures:

23 (1) Appropriate prevention, mitigation, preparedness and intervention strategies which are
 24 based on data to target priority needs and which make use of effective actions based on currently
 25 accepted best practices and once developed, the appropriate parts of the state model plan pursuant
 26 to general laws § 16-21-23.1 that include consistent, plain language and terminology;

27 (2) Formalized collaborative arrangements with state and local law enforcement and fire
 28 fighter officials, designed to ensure that school safety officers and other security personnel are
 29 adequately trained, including being trained to de-escalate potentially violent situations, and are
 30 effectively and fairly recruited;

31 (3) Policies and procedures relating to school building security, including where
 32 appropriate the use of school safety officers and/or security devices or procedures;

33 (4) Policies and procedures for annual school safety training and a review of the school
 34 crisis response plan for staff and students;

1 (5) Protocols for school personnel and students responding to [swatting](#), bomb threats,
2 hostage-takings, intrusions, and kidnappings that include consistent, plain language and
3 terminology that is recommended by the model plan pursuant to general laws § 16-21-23.1. [For
4 purposes of this chapter, "swatting" means the action or practice of making a prank call to
5 emergency services in an attempt to bring about the dispatch of law enforcement personnel to a
6 particular address;](#)

7 (6) Policies and procedures for responding to violence by students, teachers, other school
8 personnel as well as visitors to the school that include consistent, plain language and terminology
9 that is recommended by the model plan pursuant to general laws § 16-21-23.1;

10 (7) Policies and procedures for responding to acts of violence by students, teachers, other
11 school personnel and visitors to the school that include consistent, plain language and terminology
12 that is recommended by the model plan pursuant to general laws § 16-21-23.1;

13 (8) Policies and procedures for contacting appropriate law enforcement officials and
14 EMS/Fire, in the event of a violent incident and that include consistent, plain language and
15 terminology that is recommended by the model plan pursuant to general laws § 16-21-23.1;

16 (9) Policies and procedures for notification and activation of the school crisis response
17 team that include consistent, plain language and terminology that is recommended by the model
18 plan pursuant to general laws § 16-21-23.1;

19 (10) Policies and procedures for contacting parents, guardians, or persons in parental
20 relation to the students of the city, town, or region in the event of a violent incident;

21 (11) Policies and procedures for the dissemination of informative materials regarding the
22 early detection of potentially violent behaviors, including, but not limited to, the identification of
23 family, community, and environmental factors, to teachers, administrators, school personnel,
24 persons in parental relation to students of the city, town, or region students and other persons
25 deemed appropriate to receive that information;

26 (12) Strategies for improving communication, including use of common, consistent plain
27 language by school district officials, school officials and emergency responders, among students
28 and between students and staff and reporting of potentially violent incidents, such as the
29 establishment of youth-run programs, peer mediation, conflict resolution, creating a forum or
30 designating a mentor for students concerned with bullying or violence, and establishing anonymous
31 reporting mechanisms for school violence;

32 (13) A description of the duties of hall monitors and any other school safety personnel,
33 including the school crisis response team, and the training requirements of all personnel acting in
34 a school security capacity and policies and procedures for students, personnel who are in the

1 hallway during a ~~lockdown~~ crisis response situation that include consistent language and
2 terminology that is recommended by the department of elementary and secondary education;

3 (14) Policies and procedures for providing notice of threats of violence or harm to the
4 student or school employee who is the subject of the threat. The policy shall define “threats of
5 violence or harm” to include violent actions and threats of violent actions either individually or by
6 groups, but shall not include conduct or comments that a reasonable person would not seriously
7 consider to be a legitimate threat;

8 (15) Policies and procedures for disclosing information that is provided to the school
9 administrators about a student’s conduct, including, but not limited to, the student’s prior
10 disciplinary records, and history of violence, to classroom teachers, school staff, and school
11 security, if they have been determined by the principal to have a legitimate need for the information
12 in order to fulfill their professional responsibilities and for protecting such information from any
13 further disclosure; ~~and~~

14 (16) Procedures for determining whether or not any threats or conduct established in the
15 policy may be grounds for discipline of the student. School districts, school committees, school
16 officials, and school employees providing notice in good faith as required and consistent with the
17 committee’s policies adopted under this section are immune from any liability arising out of such
18 notification; and

19 (17) Procedures for students and school staff to both prepare for and to participate in
20 emergency drills.

21 (b) School safety plans, as required by this chapter, shall further include school emergency
22 response plans specific to each school building contained within each city, town, or regional school
23 district, and shall be developed and approved in consultation with local police and fire. The state
24 police shall provide consultation for those school districts that for whatever reason may not have
25 access to local police. School emergency response plans shall include, and address, but not be
26 limited to, the following elements:

27 (1) Policies and procedures for the safe evacuation of students, teachers, and other school
28 personnel as well as visitors to the school in the event of a serious violent incident or other
29 emergency, which shall include evacuation routes and shelter sites and procedures for addressing
30 medical needs, transportation, and emergency notification to persons in parental relation to a
31 student. For purposes of this subdivision, “serious violent incident” means an incident of violent
32 criminal conduct that is, or appears to be, life threatening and warrants the evacuation of students
33 and/or staff;

34 (2) Designation of an emergency response team comprised of school personnel, local law

1 enforcement officials, and representatives from local regional and/or state emergency response
2 agencies, other appropriate incident response teams including a school crisis response team, and a
3 post-incident response team that includes appropriate school personnel, medical personnel, mental
4 health counselors, and others who can assist the school community in coping with the aftermath of
5 a violent incident;

6 (3) Procedures for assuring that crisis response and law enforcement officials have access
7 to floor plans, blueprints, schematics, or other maps of the school interior and school grounds, and
8 road maps of the immediate surrounding area;

9 (4) Establishment of internal and external communication systems in emergencies that
10 include consistent, plain language and terminology that is recommended by the model plan
11 established pursuant to general laws § 16-21-23.1;

12 (5) Definition and formalization of the chain of command in a manner consistent with the
13 national interagency incident management system/incident command system;

14 (6) Procedures for review and the conduct of drills and other exercises to test components
15 of the emergency response plan, including use of checklists as described in § 16-21-23.1;

16 (7) Policies and procedures for securing and restricting access to the crime scene in order
17 to preserve evidence in cases of violent crimes on school property; and

18 (8) Policies and procedures for ensuring timely access to mental health services for those
19 students and school employees affected by a violent incident.

20 **16-21-40. Trauma-informed schools act.**

21 (a) Schools play a critical role in addressing and mitigating the effects of child trauma by
22 recognizing the impact of adversity and trauma on students, parents, and staff, and embedding
23 policies and practices that foster well-being and resilience.

24 (b) Through alignment and integration with a multi-tiered system of support frameworks
25 designed to support the academic, behavioral, social, and emotional needs of all students, the
26 commissioner of elementary and secondary education shall develop a trauma-informed schools
27 implementation plan, as well as necessary administrative guidance, professional development
28 materials, and other resources to enable all elementary and secondary schools to:

29 (1) Establish and implement trauma-informed practices within all elementary and
30 secondary education schools throughout the state, that:

31 (i) Promote a shared understanding among teachers, teacher's assistants, school leaders,
32 paraprofessionals, specialized instructional support personnel, and other staff that:

33 (A) Traumatic experiences are common among students;

34 (B) Trauma can impact student learning, behavior, and relationships in school;

1 (C) Traumatic experiences do not inherently undermine the capabilities of students to reach
2 high expectations in academics and life;

3 (D) Schoolwide learning environments, where all students and adults feel safe, welcomed,
4 and supported, can enable students to succeed despite traumatic experiences; and

5 (E) Services, supports, and programs provided to meet individual student needs should be
6 trauma-informed, where appropriate, and increase student connection to the schoolwide learning
7 environment. [Provided, effective July 1, 2024, this requirement shall include integrating trauma-](#)
8 [informed practices into emergency drills.](#)

9 (ii) Adopt disciplinary procedures and practices that:

10 (A) Accompany disciplinary actions with holistic assessments and positive behavioral
11 interventions and supports to address the underlying causes of student behavior, including trauma;

12 (B) Avoid harsh, punitive, or exclusionary disciplinary practices;

13 (C) Utilize evidence-based restorative practices with a focus on behavior modifications and
14 building community, and less punitive or exclusionary practices that erode a culture of trust;

15 (D) Implement procedures to call skilled mental health personnel when there is a mental
16 health breakdown, and resort to law enforcement only in extreme cases and/or when a student or
17 students are at risk of bodily harm; and

18 (E) Do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including sexual
19 orientation or gender identity), disability, English proficiency status, migrant status, or age.

20 (iii) Implement activities that engage teachers, teacher’s assistants, school leaders,
21 paraprofessionals, specialized instructional support personnel, and other staff, in a process of
22 school-based planning to:

23 (A) Promote a schoolwide culture of acceptance;

24 (B) Help all students feel safe and connected to the school community;

25 (C) Support all students to form positive relationships with adults and peers, understand
26 and manage emotions, achieve success academically and in extracurricular areas, and experience
27 physical and psychological health and well-being;

28 (D) Promote teamwork and effective communication among all staff and shared
29 responsibility for every student;

30 (E) Integrate evidence-based practices that build social-emotional skills into rigorous
31 academic instruction;

32 (F) Support trauma-sensitive and informed approaches to multi-tiered system of supports
33 (“MTSS”) function of team-based leadership, tiered delivery system, selection and implementation
34 of instruction and intervention, comprehensive screening and assessment system, and continuous

1 data-based decision-making; and

2 (G) Recognize and prevent adult implicit bias.

3 **16-21-41. Trauma-informed schools act commission.**

4 (a) There is hereby established a trauma-informed schools commission (hereinafter the
5 “commission”). The commission shall meet at least quarterly or approximately four (4) times per
6 year in fiscal years 2023 and 2024. It shall expire on June 30, 2024. Members of the commission
7 shall serve without compensation.

8 (b) The commission shall be appointed by the council on elementary and secondary
9 education no later than September 30, 2022, and shall be comprised of twelve (12) members: one
10 of whom shall be the commissioner of elementary and secondary education, or designee; one of
11 whom shall be a representative of the RI school superintendents association; one of whom shall be
12 appointed from among the leadership of the state’s teachers’ unions; one of whom shall be the child
13 advocate; one of whom shall be a representative of a Rhode Island-based institution of higher
14 education with expertise in child development, child mental and behavioral health, trauma-
15 informed educational practices, or a related field; two (2) of whom shall be representatives of youth-
16 serving community-based organizations that provide direct services to youth who have
17 experienced, or are at high risk of experiencing trauma; one of whom shall be a licensed clinical
18 social worker, who primarily works with youth and/or families; one of whom shall be a
19 representative of the Rhode Island Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics; one of whom
20 shall be the executive director of RI Kids Count, or designee; one of whom shall be the president
21 of Adoption RI, or designee; and one of whom shall be a representative of an organization that
22 engages and/or supports parents of school-age children, with priority given to representation from
23 a parent-led organization.

24 (c) The department of elementary and secondary education shall provide necessary staff
25 and material support to the commission in the furtherance of its purpose.

26 (d) The purpose of the commission shall be to assist the department of elementary and
27 secondary education with the implementation of the trauma-informed schools act, as set forth in
28 this section and § 16-21-40.

29 (e) In furtherance of its purpose, the commission shall undertake such actions as it
30 determines appropriate, which shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

31 (1) Conducting a review and assessment of existing trauma-informed school and
32 community-based resources and initiatives across the state;

33 (2) Informing the development of a trauma-informed school implementation plan and
34 supporting materials, that shall be submitted to the council on elementary and secondary education

1 for approval no later than April 1, 2024;

2 (3) Researching, identifying, and cataloging state, federal, and philanthropic funding
3 sources that align with the provisions of this section and § 16-21-40;

4 (4) No later than March 1, 2023, submitting an interim report to the speaker of the house,
5 the president of the senate, and the governor, that provides an update on the commission's initial
6 findings, work plan, and any preliminary recommendations for regulatory or legislative action to
7 promote the implementation of trauma-informed practices in schools; and

8 (5) No later than June 30, 2024, submitting a final report to the speaker of the house, the
9 president of the senate, and the governor, that details the commission's findings and
10 recommendations for implementing trauma-informed practices in every elementary and secondary
11 school in Rhode Island.

12 (f) The commission shall elect a chairperson from its membership. A quorum of the
13 commission at any meeting shall consist of at least seven (7) members.

14 (g) All departments, boards, and agencies of the state shall cooperate with the commission
15 and forthwith furnish any advice and information, documentary and otherwise, as may be necessary
16 or desirable to facilitate the purposes of this chapter.

17 (h) The department of education is authorized and directed to provide suitable quarters for
18 commission meetings.

19 [\(i\) Effective July 1, 2024, the commission is directed to provide input to local education](#)
20 [agencies on how to integrate trauma-informed practices into emergency drills.](#)

21 SECTION 3. Section 23-28.12-36 of the General Laws in Chapter 23-28.12 entitled
22 "Schools" is hereby amended to read as follows:

23 **23-28.12-36. Fire alarm systems — Fire drills — Penalties.**

24 (a) It shall be the duty of the principal or other person in charge of every public school or
25 private school, college, university, or postsecondary institutions or educational institution within
26 the state, having more than twenty-five (25) pupils, to instruct and train the pupils by means of
27 drills, so that they may, in a sudden emergency, be able to leave school buildings and dormitories
28 in the shortest possible time and without confusion or panic. Notwithstanding other provisions of
29 this section, in all schools or buildings used for educational purposes through the twelfth (12th)
30 grade by six (6) or more persons for four (4) or more hours per day or more than twelve (12) hours
31 per week, there shall be not less than one emergency egress drill conducted every month the facility
32 is in session with all occupants of the building participating in said drill. ~~One additional emergency~~
33 ~~egress drill shall be conducted in buildings that are not open on a year-round basis within the first~~
34 ~~(1st) thirty (30) days of operation. At least one out of every four (4) emergency egress drills or~~

1 ~~rapid dismissals shall be obstructed by means of which at least one or more exits and stairways in~~
2 ~~the school building are blocked off or not used. In addition, there shall be two (2) evacuation drills~~
3 ~~and two (2) lockdown drills; provided that, on and after July 1, 2024, the total number of fire drills~~
4 ~~conducted during the school year shall be in compliance with the provisions of chapter 21.8 of title~~
5 16. Evacuation drills shall be designed and conducted for use when conditions outside the school
6 building are safer than conditions inside the building. ~~Lockdown~~ CRD drills shall be designed and
7 conducted for use to protect school building occupants from potential dangers in the building, and
8 one shall be held in September ~~and one in January~~, and the other crisis response drill shall be held
9 in January, and both shall be held in conjunction with the local police whenever possible pursuant
10 to § 16-21.8-6.

11 (b)(1) In colleges, universities, postsecondary institutions, and residence facilities in public
12 schools or private schools there shall be at least four (4) drills or rapid dismissals during the
13 academic year for each school building or residence facility, at least two (2) of which shall be held
14 between the months of September through December. The remaining two (2) drills shall be held
15 between the months of January through June. Any college, university, or postsecondary institution
16 that holds a summer session shall hold a drill or rapid dismissal during the first (1st) full week of
17 the summer session.

18 (2) At least one drill or rapid dismissal shall be obstructed so that at least one or more exits
19 or stairways in the school building or dormitory are blocked off or not used.

20 (c) For purposes of this section, “residence facility” means a dormitory, fraternity, sorority,
21 or any other type of residence hall, whether on campus or off campus, owned or leased by a college,
22 university, postsecondary institution, public school, or private school with accommodations for
23 twenty (20) or more students.

24 (d) Notwithstanding other provisions of this section, fire drills shall be required in colleges
25 or universities only for buildings that are used as a residence facility.

26 (e) Neglect by any principal or any person in charge of any public or private school or
27 education institution to comply with the provisions of this section shall be a violation punishable
28 by a fine of not exceeding two hundred dollars (\$200).

29 (f) Written reports, on forms supplied by the department of elementary and secondary
30 education, of each fire drill shall be completed immediately upon termination of every drill and
31 shall be available for review by the fire marshal, assistant deputy fire marshal, or local fire
32 authority. The fire marshal, assistant deputy fire marshal, or local fire authority may require that a
33 fire drill be conducted in his or her presence.

34 SECTION 4. This act shall take effect on July 1, 2024.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
A N A C T
RELATING TO EDUCATION -- SCHOOL EMERGENCY DRILLS ACT

1 This act would make revisions to the number, timing, and procedures to be followed when
2 schools grades K through 12 implement fire drills, evacuation drills, and crisis response drills,
3 designed to protect the health and safety of students. This act would also require the integration of
4 trauma-informed practices in preparing and conducting those drills.

5 This act would take effect on July 1, 2024.

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