

- 1 (b) upon request, and in a manner reflecting the needs of schools and school districts of all sizes
- 2 and circumstances, provide technical assistance to schools to improve school safety, including but not limited to
- 3 assistance in:
 - 4 (i) completing and updating emergency operations plans as described in 20-1-401;
 - 5 (ii) adopting standard response protocols and standard reunification management support;
 - 6 (iii) conducting drills and exercises, including reunification drills, in accordance with 20-1-402;
 - 7 (iv) incorporating behavioral threat assessments in emergency operations plans as described in
 - 8 20-1-401; and
 - 9 (v) developing memorandums of understanding with law enforcement agencies in utilizing best
 - 10 practices for the selection, training, and supervision of school resource officers;
 - 11 (c) support schools in obtaining any available funding or grants related to school safety;
 - 12 (d) coordinate school safety efforts statewide;
 - 13 (e) upon request of a school district:
 - 14 (i) conduct site assessments that evaluate the safety, security, accessibility, and emergency
 - 15 preparedness of all school buildings and grounds; and
 - 16 (ii) provide findings and prioritized recommendations from the safety site assessment to the board
 - 17 of trustees to support required annual review and certification of the emergency operations plan;
 - 18 (f) provide voluntary program development and implementation expertise and technical support to
 - 19 schools, law enforcement agencies, and communities, which may include coordinating training for trustees,
 - 20 administrators, teachers, students, parents, and other community representatives;
 - 21 (g) research and evaluate school safety programs so schools and communities are better able to
 - 22 address their specific local needs;
 - 23 (h) prepare and disseminate information regarding best practices in creating safe and effective
 - 24 schools;
 - 25 (i) in collaboration with appropriate partners, support access to school-based tele-mental health
 - 26 services to supplement existing in-person student support services when local capacity is limited;
 - 27 (j) with funds appropriated by the legislature, maintain a voluntary statewide tip line that allows:
 - 28 (i) students, parents, school staff, and community members to report concerning behavior,

1 threats, bullying, harassment, or other safety concerns related to schools; and

2 (ii) reports received through the tip line to be appropriately triaged and referred to designated
3 school officials, emergency responders, or other appropriate entities for assessment and follow-up, consistent
4 with state and federal confidentiality laws.

5 (3) In carrying out its duties, the center shall coordinate and collaborate for the greatest benefit to
6 school and student safety and security with locally elected boards of trustees, the board of public education, the
7 office of public instruction, law enforcement agencies, and county or regional interdisciplinary child information
8 and school safety teams established pursuant to 52-2-211.

9

10 **NEW SECTION. Section 2. Montana safe schools center - governance - reporting.** (1) The

11 Montana safe schools center is governed by a board composed of the following members:

12 (a) the presiding officer of the board of public education or the presiding officer's designee;

13 (b) the superintendent of public instruction or the superintendent's designee;

14 (c) a trustee of a Montana school district appointed by the governor from a list of three candidates
15 provided by a state professional organization of school district trustees;

16 (d) a superintendent of a Montana school district appointed by the governor from a list of three
17 candidates provided by a state professional organization of school district superintendents;

18 (e) a school principal of a Montana school district appointed by the governor from a list of three
19 candidates provided by a state professional organization of school principals; and

20 (f) a tribal representative appointed by the governor from a list of three candidates provided by the
21 Montana advisory council on Indian education.

22 (2) The governing board shall elect a presiding officer and vice presiding officer to 2-year terms
23 without limitation on the number of terms.

24 (3) The governing board shall hire an executive director and an assistant director for the center
25 who shall both serve on the governing board in a nonvoting capacity. The executive director shall, with the
26 oversight of the governing board execute the duties described under subsection (2).

27 (4) The governing board shall provide a biennial report to the education interim committee and
28 education interim budget committee in accordance with the provisions of 5-11-210. The report must include

1 detailed descriptions of the manner in which the center has performed the duties described under subsection

2 (2) including:

3 (a) a detailed financial report of the center's revenues and expenditures;

4 (b) the number of schools receiving technical assistance from the center broken down by the types
5 of school and types of technical assistance listed in subsection (2)(b) of this section; and

6 (c) statistics on:

7 (i) tip line usage; and

8 (i) tele-mental health services provided.

9

10 **Section 3.** Section 20-1-401, MCA, is amended to read:

11 ~~"20-1-401. Disaster drills to be conducted regularly -- districts to identify disaster risks and~~

12 ~~adopt school safety plan School districts to adopt and update emergency operations plans -- --~~

13 ~~definitions. (1) As used in this part, "disaster" means the occurrence or imminent threat of damage, injury, or~~
14 ~~loss of life or property. Disaster drills must be conducted regularly in accordance with this part.~~

15 ~~(2) A board of trustees shall identify the local hazards that exist within the boundaries of its school~~
16 ~~district and design and incorporate drills in its school safety plan or emergency operations plan to address~~
17 ~~those hazards.~~

18 ~~(3)(1) (a) A board of trustees shall adopt a school safety plan or an emergency operations plan that~~
19 ~~addresses issues of school safety relating to school buildings and facilities, communications systems, and~~
20 ~~school grounds with the with input from the local community and that addresses coordination with the county or~~
21 ~~regional interdisciplinary child information and school safety team provided for in 52-2-214. The trustees shall~~
22 review the ~~school safety plan or~~ emergency operations plan at least annually and update the plan as
23 determined necessary by the trustees and school administrators based on changing circumstances pertaining
24 to school safety.

25 ~~(b)(2) The school safety plan or~~ emergency operations plan must include the following threat
26 assessment practices:

27 ~~(+)(a)~~ (a) the adoption of a threat assessment protocol, outlining policies and procedures for
28 implementation when there is notification of a student threat of harm to others or property; and

1 ~~(ii)(b)~~ an identified threat assessment team, composed of key staff, that meets at least monthly and
2 may include behavioral threat assessment addressing students in need of academic and behavioral supports or
3 interventions.

4 ~~(3)~~ If requested by the board of trustees, the Montana safe schools center, established in
5 [section1] shall provide assistance to a school district in developing, reviewing, and updating the district's
6 emergency operations plan.

7 ~~(e)(4)~~ The trustees shall certify annually to the office of public instruction that the adopted ~~school~~
8 ~~safety plan or~~ emergency operations plan has been reviewed. Once the trustees have made the certification to
9 the office of public instruction, the trustees may transfer funds pursuant to 20-9-236 to make improvements to
10 school safety and security.

11 ~~(5)~~ As used in this part, the following definitions apply:

12 ~~(a)~~ "Emergency" means an occurrence or imminent threat of harm, injury, loss of life, or damage to
13 property arising from natural hazards, public health emergencies, technological incidents, or acts of violence.

14 ~~(b)~~ "Emergency operations plan" means a comprehensive, all-hazards plan that:

15 ~~(i)~~ encompasses the full spectrum of school safety considerations, including physical
16 infrastructure, communication systems, and school grounds; and

17 ~~(ii)~~ incorporates functional and hazard-specific procedures across prevention, protection,
18 mitigation, response, and recovery in coordination with local community first responders."

19
20 **Section 4.** Section 20-1-402, MCA, is amended to read:

21 **"20-1-402. Number of ~~disaster~~ emergency drills required -- time of drills to vary.** There must be
22 at least eight ~~disaster~~ emergency drills a year in a school that reflect specific hazards for the school site as
23 described in the school districts' emergency operations plan. Drills must be held at different hours of the day or
24 evening to avoid distinction between drills and actual ~~disasters~~ emergencies."

25
26 **Section 5.** Section 20-1-404, MCA, is amended to read:

27 **"20-1-404. Drill to sound ~~on disaster evacuation system~~ emergency evacuation -- recall**
28 **signal to be distinct -- control of signal.** (1) If ~~a disaster~~ an emergency drill is signaled, the signal must be

1 sounded on the ~~disaster-emergency~~ alarm system and not on the signal system used to dismiss classes.

2 (2) The recall signal must be separate and distinct from any other signal. The recall signal may be
3 given by distinctive colored flags or banners. If the recall signal is electrical, the push buttons or other controls
4 must be kept under lock and the key kept in the possession of the principal or some other designated person in
5 order to prevent a recall at a time when there is a disaster. Regardless of the method of recall, the means of
6 giving the signal must be kept under lock."

7

8 **Section 6.** Section 20-1-407, MCA, is amended to read:

9 **"20-1-407. Inspection of exits -- cooperation with local authorities ~~having jurisdiction in~~**
10 **~~conducting emergency~~ drills.** It is the duty of the school authorities to inspect all exit facilities periodically in
11 order to make sure that all stairways, doors, and other exits are in proper condition. School authorities shall
12 cooperate with the local authorities ~~having jurisdiction in~~ conducting ~~disaster-emergency~~ drills."

13

14 NEW SECTION. **Section 7. Appropriations.** (1) There is appropriated \$863,496 from TBD to the
15 Montana university system for the biennium beginning July 1, 2027.

16 (2) The appropriation must be used for staffing and performing the duties of the Montana safe school
17 center established in [Section 1].

18 (3) The legislature intends that the appropriation in this section be considered part of the ongoing base
19 for the next legislative session.

20

21 NEW SECTION. **Section 8. Codification instruction.** [Sections 1 and 2] are intended to be codified
22 as an integral part of Title 20, chapter 1, part 4, and the provisions of Title 20, chapter 1, part 4, apply to
23 [sections 1 and 2].

24

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