

1 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2 1st Session of the 60th Legislature (2025)

3 COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE

4 FOR

5 HOUSE BILL NO. 1417

6 By: West (Josh)

7 COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE

8 An Act relating to school safety; creating the School
9 Access for Emergency Response Act; defining terms;
10 creating the School Access for Emergency Response
11 Grant Program within the State Department of
12 Education; construing grant program purposes;
13 prohibiting impacts to current public safety system
14 loading capabilities; prescribing the administration
15 and implementation of the grant program; creating the
16 grant selection committee; requiring promulgation of
17 rules; prescribing certain rule requirements;
18 directing the appointment of committee members;
19 implementing certain grant eligibility criteria;
20 requiring certain applicant considerations;
21 specifying award and distribution dates; requiring
22 school districts to report on the grant program;
23 mandating reporting to the Legislature; creating the
24 School Access for Emergency Response Revolving Fund;
specifying fund sources; allowing appropriation;
clarifying fund purpose; prescribing fund expenditure
limitations; construing disbursement of fund amounts;
providing for codification; and providing an
effective date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 5-149.5 of Title 70, unless
there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

1 This act shall be known and may be cited as the "School Access
2 for Emergency Response Act" or the "SAFER Act".

3 SECTION 2. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
4 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 5-149.6 of Title 70, unless
5 there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

6 As used in the School Access For Emergency Response Act:

7 1. "Best practices in interoperable emergency communications"
8 means to identify the interoperable emergency communications needs
9 at a school level, to help target technical assistance, funding, and
10 other support, and to prepare for next-generation communications
11 technologies as exemplified by interoperable communications
12 technologies to enhance and better ensure school safety throughout
13 the State of Oklahoma;

14 2. "Board" may alternately or jointly reference the State Board
15 of Education and the Oklahoma Office of Homeland Security;

16 3. "Crisis management plan" means a plan including tactical
17 strategies and actions for responding to an emergency as set forth
18 by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Manual IS-0100.C.

19 The key elements of a crisis management plan shall include, but
20 not necessarily be limited to:

- 21 a. threat assessment, recurring risk assessment, and
- 22 proactive identification following said assessments,
- 23 b. crisis response team structure,

- c. communication protocols, including implementation, training, as well as maintenance and timely upgrading of interoperable communication systems,
- d. emergency response procedures,
- e. resource allocation guidelines, and
- f. recovery and continuity strategies;

4. "Department" may alternately or jointly reference the State Board of Education and the State Office of Homeland Security;

5. "Grant program" means the School Access for Emergency Response Grant Program created in Section 3 of this act;

6. "Incident Command System" (ICS) means the standardized approach to incident management as set forth by Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Manual IS-0100.C: An Introduction to the Incident Command System. ICS shall be adopted by grant applicants as a precedent to be considered for funding through this act. The Manual includes:

- a. unified command structure,
- b. common terminology,
- c. modular organization,
- d. integrated communications via interoperable technology, equipment, and training, and
- e. comprehensive resource management;

7. "Interoperability" means the ability of one or more radio systems to communicate with another radio system in real-time.

1 Interoperability includes the teamwork that occurs over real-time
2 radio broadcast channels between school district safety teams,
3 school-based safety teams, and professional emergency responders;

4 8. "Interoperable communications provider" means the supplier
5 or suppliers of interoperable communications technology, both
6 hardware and software, as well as related training, maintenance, and
7 upgrades of interoperable communications systems;

8 9. "Interoperable technology" means software and hardware that
9 enables two different radio systems and other communications devices
10 to communicate seamlessly in real time via radio broadcast channels
11 regardless of underlying technologies or manufacturers;

12 10. "Memorandum of Understanding" (MOU) means an agreement
13 between two or more parties that is designed and intended to
14 formalize a working relationship. Among other components as
15 identified by the stakeholders, the MOU is designed and intended to
16 outline the identified parties agreement to share private, assigned
17 Federal Communications Commission (FCC) licensed radio frequencies
18 or channels as well as other protocols and technologies needed to
19 achieve two-way radio interoperability as contemplated by NIMS IS-
20 0100.C for schools;

21 11. a. "National Response Framework" (NRF) means the manner
22 in which the United States responds to all types of
23 disasters and emergencies and includes the following
24 key elements:

- 1 (1) enumerated core capabilities of prevention,
2 protection, mitigation, response, and recovery,
- 3 (2) a component of the National Strategy for Homeland
4 Security that establishes a comprehensive,
5 national, all-hazards approach to domestic
6 incident response,
- 7 (3) an explanation of the roles and responsibilities
8 of federal, state, local, tribal governments,
9 private sector, and non-governmental
10 organizations in disaster response, and
- 11 (4) scalable, flexible, and adaptable coordination
12 structures to align key roles and
13 responsibilities across the nation, including
14 (and specifically for the purposes of this act)
15 for small, medium, and large school districts and
16 associated public safety agencies;

17 b. For the purposes of the School Access for Emergency
18 Response Act, NRF:

- 19 (1) enumerates the interrelationship between school
20 access for emergency response and the National
21 Incident Management System (NIMS), and
- 22 (2) outlines the operation of NIMS Incident Command
23 System in relations to school access for
24 emergency response;

1 12. "Public safety answering point" means a facility equipped
2 and staffed to provide emergency telephone service;

3 13. "Radio system" means a private network for voice
4 communications;

5 14. "Real-time communications network" means private licensed
6 radio frequencies, channels, or talk-groups, on either a wire or
7 wireless communication network, that allows for real-time voice or
8 data transmissions between a public safety answering point, specific
9 school safety team members, school district safety teams, and first
10 responders;

11 15. "Revolving fund" means the School Access for Emergency
12 Response Revolving Fund created in Section 6 of this act;

13 16. "Safety team" means personnel who have a role in crisis
14 management plans, including school district safety teams and school-
15 based safety teams. In regard to school-based safety teams,
16 training includes NIMS IS-0100.C protocols as well as training with
17 interoperable communications technology itself;

18 17. "School" means elementary, middle, and secondary schools
19 supported by public taxation and shall include charter schools
20 established pursuant to the Oklahoma Charter Schools Act; and

21 18. "Standards-based" means radio specifications defined by a
22 national association of the telecommunications industry that every
23 manufacturer can follow to implement equipment interoperability.

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1 SECTION 3. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
2 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 5-149.7 of Title 70, unless
3 there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

4 A. There is hereby created in the State Department of Education
5 the School Access for Emergency Response Grant Program to provide
6 grants to schools for needed interoperable communication hardware,
7 software, equipment maintenance, and training to allow for seamless
8 communications between first responder communications systems, new
9 or existing school district communications systems, and new or
10 existing school-based systems.

11 B. Grant recipients may use the money received through the
12 grant program for the following purposes:

13 1. To deliver training programs to teach district safety teams
14 and security personnel as well as appropriate school-based safety
15 teams and other personnel basic procedures for effective
16 communications with first responders in an emergency. The training
17 shall be based upon Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
18 Manual IS-0100.C: An Introduction to the Incident Command System.
19 As required by federal law and associated regulations, these derived
20 training elements shall include:

21 a. completion of the entire course, which is usually
22 available online through the Federal Emergency
23 Management Agency (FEMA) Emergency Management
24 Institute (EMI) website,

- b. an expectation of understanding the basic principles and features of ISC, including its purpose, organization, and the roles and responsibilities of key positions within the structure established by the FEMA Manual,
- c. familiarization with how ISC is applied in various types of school-based incidents, including planned events, natural disasters, and other types of crisis incidents or emergency situations,
- d. scenario-based exercises to reinforce learning and ensure comprehension of the material,
- e. a final exam to assess the participant's understanding of the course material. A passing score, often seventy-five percent (75%) or higher, is necessary to receive a certificate of completion,
- f. a certification upon successful completion of the course and final exam, which may be necessary for certain federal positions or for compliance with federal emergency management directives, and
- g. periodic refresher courses or continuing education to maintain certification and stay current with any changes or updates to the system;

2. To implement an interoperable technology solution to provide or to upgrade the following:

- a. a system or technology that can be activated and deactivated by a public safety answering point, a network administrator, and a school over both the radio system and other communications networks,
- b. radio and other technology bridge ability that is nonradio vendor specific for connecting independent school networks, school district networks, and public safety networks in the region, and
- c. an interoperable real-time radio broadcast solution that operates over specifically managed radio networks and other proactively identified communications networks; and

3. To maintain or improve a school's existing interoperable communication hardware or software or to provide interoperable communication hardware and software to a school that does not yet have it.

C. The proposed interoperable communications solution shall not increase or impact public safety system loading in existence at the time of the enactment of this act. School-based and school district interoperable communications systems shall consider coverage, capacity, and related features in regard to any necessary radio system capacity expansions where school loading is determined to potentially have more than a negligible impact on preexisting public safety system loading.

1 D. The State Department of Education shall administer the grant
2 program. Subject to the availability of funds, grants shall be paid
3 out of the "School Access for Emergency Response Revolving Fund"
4 created in Section 6 of this act.

5 E. The State Board of Education, in consultation with the grant
6 selection committee created in subsection F of this section, shall
7 implement the grant program in accordance with this act. The
8 Department shall promulgate rules necessary to implement the
9 requirements of this act. At minimum, such rules shall specify the
10 time frames for applying for grants, the form of the grant program
11 application, and the time frames for distributing grant money.
12 These rules shall require that school districts and schools making
13 application shall adopt the National Incident Management System
14 (NIMS) to train personnel in the Incident Command System (IS-0100.C)
15 and conduct joint exercises involving professional first responders
16 with schools and school districts to better coordinate teamwork and
17 overall response to incidents.

18 F. There is hereby created the grant selection committee to
19 work with the State Board of Education to determine whether a grant
20 applicant satisfies the criteria to receive a grant. The committee
21 shall be composed of seven (7) members appointed as specified in
22 this subsection. The members of the committee shall serve without
23 compensation, but shall be reimbursed for all actual and necessary
24 expenses incurred while engaged in the discharge of official duties

1 pursuant to this act in accordance with the State Travel
2 Reimbursement Act. Members of the committee shall meet as often as
3 deemed necessary by the Board to accomplish the work of the
4 committee. Members of the committee shall be appointed on or before
5 November 1, 2025, as follows:

6 1. The Governor shall appoint one member;

7 2. The Speaker of the Oklahoma House of Representatives shall
8 appoint one member who represents urban or suburban school
9 districts, and one member who represents the chiefs of police;

10 3. The President Pro Tempore of the Oklahoma State Senate shall
11 appoint one member who represents rural school districts, and one
12 member who represents county sheriffs;

13 4. The Commissioner of Public Safety shall appoint one member;
14 and

15 5. The State Superintendent of Public Instruction shall appoint
16 one member.

17 SECTION 4. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
18 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 5-149.8 of Title 70, unless
19 there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

20 A. A school is required to have a Memorandum of Understanding,
21 as defined in Section 2 of this act, with its regional public safety
22 answering point and the local law enforcement agency or agencies
23 that serve the school for communications interoperability to be
24 eligible to apply for a grant under this act. To receive a grant, a

1 school must submit an application to the Department in accordance
2 with rules promulgated by the Department. At minimum, the
3 application must include the following information:

4 1. A description of the school's current interoperable
5 communication technology, if any;

6 2. A description of efforts that the school has taken to
7 coordinate emergency communication with law enforcement, 9-1-1
8 system administrators, and other schools; and

9 3. A description of the purpose or purposes for which the
10 school would plan to use the grant money, including, but not limited
11 to, proposed training programs, joint exercise plans, and
12 interoperability technology solutions.

13 B. The grant selection committee created in Section 3 of this
14 act shall review the applications received pursuant to this section.
15 In awarding grants, the grant selection committee shall consider
16 whether the school has a crisis management plan in place with safety
17 team members designated for communications with first responders.

18 C. Subject to the availability of funds, on or before June 30,
19 2026, and on or before June 30 each year thereafter for the duration
20 of the grant program, the Board shall award grants as provided in
21 this act. The Board shall distribute the grant money within thirty
22 (30) days after the grants are awarded.

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1 SECTION 5. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
2 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 5-149.9 of Title 70, unless
3 there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

4 A. On or before January 15, 2028, and on or before January 15
5 each year thereafter for the duration of the grant program, each
6 school district with schools that received a grant through the grant
7 program provided in this act shall submit a report to the
8 Department. At minimum, the report shall include the following
9 information:

10 1. The number of schools within the district that used grant
11 money to provide training programs to appropriate personnel
12 regarding effective communications with first responders in an
13 emergency;

14 2. The number of schools within the district that used grant
15 money to provide or upgrade its interoperable technology, including
16 interoperable communication hardware or software; and

17 3. The estimated number of enrolled students that benefitted or
18 will benefit from how the grant money was utilized.

19 B. On or before May 30, 2028, and on or before May 30 each year
20 thereafter for the duration of the grant program, the Department
21 shall present a summarized report of the activities of the grant
22 program to the Oklahoma Legislature.

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1 SECTION 6. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
2 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 5-149.10 of Title 70, unless
3 there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

4 A. There is hereby created in the State Treasury a revolving
5 fund for the State Department of Education to be designated the
6 "School Access for Emergency Response Revolving Fund". The fund
7 shall be a continuing fund, not subject to fiscal year limitations,
8 and shall consist of all monies received by the Department of
9 Education from:

10 1. Reimbursements, grants, or other monies received from other
11 state agencies and entities for establishing or maintaining
12 interoperable communication between schools and public safety
13 officials;

14 2. Gifts, donations, and bequests; and

15 3. Monies appropriated or apportioned by the Legislature.

16 B. All monies accruing to the credit of the School Access for
17 Emergency Response Revolving Fund are hereby appropriated and may be
18 budgeted and expended by the State Department of Education for the
19 purpose of providing grants for the School Access for Emergency
20 Response Grant Program as created in Section 3 of this act.

21 C. Expenditures from the School Access for Emergency Response
22 Revolving Fund shall be made upon warrants issued by the State
23 Treasurer against claims filed as prescribed by law with the
24 Director of the Office of Management and Enterprise Services for

1 approval and payment. Expenditures from the School Access for
2 Emergency Response Revolving Fund shall not exceed Five Million
3 Dollars (\$5,000,000.00) in any fiscal year and shall be divided
4 equally among grant applicants who were approved by the State Board
5 of Education and grant selection committee as provided for in
6 Section 3 of this act.

7 SECTION 7. This act shall become effective November 1, 2025.

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