

OLR Backgrounder: Subsequent Amendments to Education Provisions in Public Act 13-3

By: Marybeth Sullivan, Senior Legislative Attorney
June 10, 2020 | 2020-R-0156

Issue

This report describes K-12 education and higher education provisions in “An Act Concerning Gun Violence Prevention and Children’s Safety” that the General Assembly amended during the legislative sessions following the act’s passage ([PA 13-3](#), §§ 80-99).

Summary

PA 13-3, passed in response to the December 2012 tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, contains provisions relating to elementary, secondary, and postsecondary school safety. During subsequent legislative sessions, the General Assembly amended the following school safety provisions in the original act: (1) School Safety Infrastructure Council membership, (2) school safety infrastructure standards, (3) school security infrastructure grants, (4) school security and safety standards, and (5) the school security consultant registry, among other topics.

School Safety Infrastructure Council (SSIC) Membership

The act created this council to develop safety infrastructure standards for the existing school construction projects program and a new school security infrastructure grant program ([PA 13-3](#), § 80). Originally, council membership consisted of nine members: six appointed by legislative leaders and three ex-officio members. In subsequent years, the legislature increased the council’s membership to include two new gubernatorial appointments: a licensed building official ([PA 14-90](#)) and a licensed architect ([PA 15-3](#), June Special Session (JSS)).

Waiver for School Safety Infrastructure Standards Requirements

The act required all new school construction projects seeking a state grant, as of July 1, 2014, to meet the school safety infrastructure standards issued by SSIC ([PA 13-3](#), §§ 81-82). The legislature subsequently authorized the Department of Administrative Services commissioner to waive the requirement that a school construction project meet these standards if he determines that (1) the grant application demonstrates that the applicant made a good-faith effort to address the standards and (2) compliance with them would be infeasible, unreasonable, or excessively expensive ([PA 14-90](#)).

School Security Infrastructure Grants

The act established a competitive state grant program to improve security infrastructure in schools. It initially authorized up to \$15 million in state bonds for the program ([PA 13-3](#), §§ 84-85). In subsequent years, the legislature removed the program's sunset date and incrementally increased the bond authorization by an additional \$57 million for a total of \$72 million through FY 20 ([PA 17-2](#), JSS, § 490; [PA 20-1](#), § 74).

Additionally, the legislature has made the following changes to grant program eligibility, among others:

1. expanded eligible applicants beyond public schools to include regional education service centers, state charter schools, technical high schools, endowed academies, private schools, and private child care centers and preschools that have received threats (excluding family child care homes) and
2. expanded the types of security infrastructure that are eligible for reimbursement grants ([PA 14-98](#), § 73; [PA 20-1](#), § 73).

School Security and Safety Standards

The act required (1) each board of education to develop and implement a school security and safety plan for each school within its district and (2) the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP), in consultation with the State Department of Education (SDE), to develop standards for these plans ([PA 13-3](#), §§ 86 & 87). The legislature subsequently required (1) DESPP to reevaluate and update existing standards for the plans every three years, beginning by January 1, 2020, and (2) SDE to distribute the standards to all public schools ([PA 19-52](#)). It also required DESPP to revise the standards by October 1, 2019, to include provisions relating to emergency

communication plans for students who are either (1) deaf or hard of hearing or (2) blind or visually impaired and deaf ([PA 19-184](#)).

School Security Consultant Registry

The act required DESPP to establish and maintain a registry of school security consultants doing business in Connecticut and publish it online ([PA 13-3](#), § 91). The legislature subsequently required DESPP to develop criteria to identify qualified school security consultants and limit the existing registry to only these individuals ([PA 19-52](#)).

MS:kl