



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 598

January Session, 2025

Substitute House Bill No. 7077

House of Representatives, April 8, 2025

The Committee on Education reported through REP. LEEPER of the 132nd Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING CRISIS RESPONSE DRILLS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) (a) Not later than April 1, 2026,
2 the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, in
3 collaboration with the Connecticut Center for School Safety and Crisis
4 Prevention at Western Connecticut State University, shall (1) develop a
5 clear definition for crisis response drills for purposes of section 10-231
6 of the general statutes, as amended by this act, (2) develop standardized
7 terminology for the administration and review of crisis response drills,
8 (3) develop guidance on (A) standardized responses to crises, and (B)
9 standardized debriefing protocols following a crisis, and (4) develop an
10 evaluation template for crisis response drills that allows school districts
11 to use feedback from participants of the crisis response drill to assess the
12 efficacy of the crisis response drill and make adjustments to subsequent
13 crisis response drills to improve preparedness while preventing
14 emotional harm and supporting psychological safety.

15 (b) The Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, in

16 collaboration with the Connecticut Center for School Safety and Crisis
17 Prevention at Western Connecticut State University, shall conduct a
18 study of the impact of crisis response drills on the school community.

19 (c) (1) Not later than April 1, 2026, the department shall submit a
20 report on the items described in subdivisions (1) to (4), inclusive, of
21 subsection (a) of this section, including any recommendations, to the
22 joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of
23 matters relating to education, in accordance with the provisions of
24 section 11-4a of the general statutes.

25 (2) Not later than July 1, 2028, the department shall submit a report
26 on the study conducted pursuant to subsection (b) of this section,
27 including any recommendations, to the joint standing committee of the
28 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education,
29 in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes.

30 Sec. 2. Section 10-231 of the general statutes is repealed and the
31 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

32 (a) Each local and regional board of education shall provide for a fire
33 drill to be held in the schools of such board not later than thirty days
34 after the first day of each school year and at least once each month
35 thereafter, except as provided in subsection (b) of this section.

36 (b) Each such board shall substitute a crisis response drill for a fire
37 drill once every three months and shall develop the format of such crisis
38 response drill [in consultation] in accordance with the crisis response
39 protocols described in section 3 of this act and with the appropriate local
40 law enforcement agency. A representative of such agency may
41 supervise and participate in any such crisis response drill.

42 Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) For the school year commencing
43 July 1, 2026, and each school year thereafter, each crisis response drill
44 conducted pursuant to section 10-231 of the general statutes, as
45 amended by this act, shall be conducted as follows: (1) Utilize the (A)
46 definition for crisis response drills, (B) standardized terminology for the

47 administration and review of crisis response drills, and (C) guidance on
48 standardized responses to crises and debriefing protocols following a
49 crisis, developed by the Department of Emergency Services and Public
50 Protection pursuant to section 1 of this act, (2) the school security and
51 safety committee, as described in section 10-222m of the general statutes,
52 as amended by this act, shall collaborate with the school climate
53 committee, as described in section 10-222ff of the general statutes, to
54 plan crisis response drills that prioritize the physical and psychological
55 safety of students and school personnel, (3) crisis drills shall be trauma-
56 informed, including utilizing an approach that takes into account prior
57 traumatic experiences and designed to prevent emotional harm to and
58 support the psychological safety of students and school personnel, with
59 mental health professionals' participation integrated throughout the
60 crisis response drill, (4) prior to conducting a crisis response drill, school
61 personnel shall provide age-appropriate education for students and
62 training for school personnel to build knowledge and skills to reduce
63 the potential for confusion or emotional distress, including a review of
64 the purpose and procedures for crisis response drills prior to the first
65 crisis response drill of the school year and notification to students,
66 school personnel and parents and guardians one week in advance of
67 conducting a crisis response drill, (5) school personnel shall
68 communicate, in a clear manner to ensure understanding, the nature
69 and purpose of crisis response drills to the parents and guardians of
70 students at the school prior to conducting a crisis response drill, (6) all
71 communication regarding crisis response drills shall be provided in the
72 native language of each student, school personnel and parents and
73 guardians, (7) at the commencement of the crisis response drill, students
74 and school personnel shall be informed that they are participating in a
75 crisis response drill to avoid confusion when an actual emergency
76 situation is occurring, (8) accommodations for students with cognitive,
77 physical or sensory disability shall be provided, to the extent
78 practicable, during a crisis response drill to ensure the safety and
79 participation of such students, (9) crisis response drills conducted with
80 students shall not include an active assailant simulation or simulated
81 violence with highly sensorial elements such as fake assailants, firearms,

82 gunfire sounds, blood or injuries, and a crisis response drill that is
83 conducted outside of the regular school day and exclusively for school
84 personnel, first responders and other school volunteers may include an
85 active assailant simulation or such simulated violence, and (10) evaluate
86 each crisis response drill using the evaluation template developed
87 pursuant to section 1 of this act.

88 Sec. 4. Section 10-222m of the general statutes, as amended by section
89 63 of public act 23-167, is repealed and the following is substituted in
90 lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

91 (a) For the school year commencing July 1, 2014, and each school year
92 thereafter, each local and regional board of education shall develop and
93 implement a school security and safety plan for each school under the
94 jurisdiction of such board. Such plans shall be based on the school
95 security and safety plan standards developed by the Department of
96 Emergency Services and Public Protection, pursuant to section 10-222n.
97 Each local and regional board of education shall annually review and
98 update, if necessary, such plans.

99 (b) For the school year commencing July 1, 2014, and each school year
100 thereafter, each local and regional board of education shall establish a
101 school security and safety committee at each school under the
102 jurisdiction of such board. The school security and safety committee
103 shall be responsible for assisting in the development of the school
104 security and safety plan for the school and administering such plan.
105 Such school security and safety committee shall consist of a local police
106 officer, a local first responder, a teacher and an administrator employed
107 at the school, a mental health professional, as defined in section 10-76t,
108 a parent or guardian of a student enrolled in the school and any other
109 person the board of education deems necessary. Any parent or guardian
110 serving as a member of a school security and safety committee shall not
111 have access to information reported to such committee that would result
112 in a violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974,
113 20 USC 1232g, as amended from time to time.

114 (c) Each local and regional board of education shall (1) annually

115 submit the school security and safety plan for each school under the
116 jurisdiction of such board, developed pursuant to subsection (a) of this
117 section, to the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection,
118 and (2) make any portion of such school security and safety plan that is
119 not prohibited from disclosure pursuant to section 1-210 available to
120 members of the school community upon request.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	July 1, 2025	New section
Sec. 2	July 1, 2025	10-231
Sec. 3	July 1, 2025	New section
Sec. 4	July 1, 2025	10-222m

Statement of Legislative Commissioners:

In Section 3, "in accordance with the following protocols" was changed to "as follows", for proper form; "age-appropriate education and training to allow students and school personnel" was changed to "age-appropriate education for students and training for school personnel", for clarity; and "for the purpose of avoiding" was changed to "to avoid" and "except" was changed to "and", for proper form.

ED *Joint Favorable Subst.*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 26 \$	FY 27 \$
Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection	GF - Cost	84,500	84,500
State Comptroller - Fringe Benefits ¹	GF - Cost	33,382	33,382

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact:

Municipalities	Effect	FY 26 \$	FY 27 \$
Local and Regional School Districts	STATE MANDATE ² - Cost	None	Minimal

Explanation

The bill establishes new protocols for school crisis response drills, resulting in a total cost to the state of \$117,882 in FY 26 and FY 27, as well as a minimal cost to local and regional school districts beginning in FY 27.

Section 1, which requires the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) to develop definitions, terminology, guidance, and an evaluation template for crisis response drills by April 1, 2026, results in a cost of \$84,500 to DESPP and \$33,382 to the State

¹ The fringe benefit costs for most state employees are budgeted centrally in accounts administered by the Comptroller. The estimated active employee fringe benefit cost associated with most personnel changes is 40.71% of payroll in FY 26.

² State mandate is defined in Sec. 2-32b(2) of the Connecticut General Statutes, "state mandate" means any state initiated constitutional, statutory or executive action that requires a local government to establish, expand or modify its activities in such a way as to necessitate additional expenditures from local revenues.

Comptroller – Fringe Benefits in FY 26 and FY 27. To develop such standards, including standard responses to crises and debriefing protocols, and to prepare the required reports under the bill, DESPP will need to hire one durational Emergency Management Program Specialist, with an estimated annual starting salary of \$82,000 and annual equipment costs of up to \$2,500.

Section 3 requires local and regional school districts to implement certain provisions relating to crisis response drills beginning in FY 27, including providing communication regarding crisis response drills in a recipient's native language. The cost to school districts is expected to be minimal but will depend on the number of native languages and the complexity of the communication being translated.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation. The position identified in section 1 will no longer be required beyond FY 28 following the conclusion of the bill's requirements for DESPP.

OLR Bill Analysis**sHB 7077*****AN ACT CONCERNING CRISIS RESPONSE DRILLS.*****SUMMARY**

Beginning with the 2026-27 school year, this bill establishes new protocols for school crisis response drills that, among other things, prohibit active assailant simulations, are designed to support the physical and psychological safety of students and school personnel, and provide one week advance notice to students, school personnel, and parents and guardians before a drill is held. By law, and unchanged by the bill, each public school must conduct a quarterly crisis response drill.

The bill requires the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP), in collaboration with the Connecticut Center for School Safety and Crisis Prevention (crisis prevention center) at Western Connecticut State University, to develop (1) standard terminology and definitions and (2) guidance for crisis responses and crisis debriefing by April 1, 2026.

The bill also requires each board of education to make the parts of each school's security and safety plan that are not prohibited from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) available, upon request, to members of the school community.

Additionally, the bill requires DESPP, in collaboration with the crisis prevention center, to do a study of the impact of crisis response drills on the school community and submit a report on it to the Education Committee by July 1, 2028.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

§§ 2 & 3 — NEW CRISIS RESPONSE DRILL PROTOCOLS

Starting with the 2026-27 school year (the school year that begins July 1, 2026), the bill requires (1) each school district to take certain steps before holding a crisis response drill and (2) that the drill be done following the bill's requirements.

Requirements and Steps Before Conducting a Drill

The bill requires the school security and safety committee to collaborate with the school climate committee to plan crisis response drills that prioritize the physical and psychological safety of students and school personnel. By law, each public school must have a school security and safety committee to help develop and administer the school's security and safety plan and each school's school climate committee is charged with duties related to the school's anti-bullying climate improvement plan and related activities.

Furthermore, the bill requires that:

1. drills use the definitions, terminology, and guidance developed by DESPP and the crisis response center (see § 1, below);
2. drills be trauma-informed, using an approach that considers prior traumatic experiences and is designed to prevent emotional harm to, and support the psychological safety of, students and school personnel, with mental health professionals' participation integrated throughout the crisis response drill;
3. before doing a crisis response drill, school staff educate students and train personnel to build knowledge and skills intended to reduce the potential for confusion or emotional distress, including reviewing the crisis response drill's purpose and procedures before the first drill of the year;
4. staff notify students, school personnel, and parents and guardians one week in advance before holding a crisis response drill;
5. staff communicate, in a clear way, the nature and purpose of the

drills to the parents and guardians of students at the school before holding a crisis response drill (presumably, this could be part of the notification one week in advance of a drill); and

6. all communication about drills be provided in the native language of each student, school personnel, and parents and guardians.

The bill also prohibits drills done with students from including an active assailant simulation or simulated violence with highly sensorial elements (such as fake assailants, firearms, gunfire sounds, blood, or injuries). A drill may include an active assailant simulation or simulated violence if it is held outside of the regular school day and exclusively for school personnel, first responders, and other school volunteers.

Drill Day Requirements

At the start of a crisis response drill, the bill requires school staff to inform students and other school personnel that they are participating in a crisis response drill to avoid confusion when an actual emergency situation occurs. Also, the school must accommodate students with cognitive, physical, or sensory disabilities, to the extent practicable, during the drill to ensure their safety and participation.

Evaluation

The bill requires school staff to evaluate each crisis response drill using the evaluation template the bill requires to be developed (see § 1).

§ 1 — DRILL DEFINITIONS, TERMINOLOGY, AND GUIDANCE

Under the bill, DESPP and the center must by April 1, 2026, develop:

1. a school crisis response drill definition,
2. standardized terminology for conducting and reviewing crisis response drills,
3. guidance on standardized (a) crisis responses and (b) debriefing protocols following a crisis, and

4. an evaluation template that allows school districts to use drill participant feedback to (a) assess drill efficacy and (b) adjust future drills to improve preparedness while preventing emotional harm and supporting psychological safety.

The bill requires DESPP to submit a report to the Education Committee on the required items described above with any recommendations by April 1, 2026.

§ 4 — SCHOOL SECURITY AND SAFETY PLAN AVAILABLE TO SCHOOL COMMUNITY

By law, each local and regional board of education must annually submit the school security and safety plan for each school under its jurisdiction to DESPP. The bill also requires each board to make any part of the plan that is not prohibited from disclosure under FOIA (CGS §§ 1-200 to -243) available to members of the school community upon request. (Presumably, this would only apply to an informal, non-FOIA request for plan information; a member of the public could still seek the information through the formal FOIA process.)

While FOIA generally requires government documents and records to be made available to the public, there are exceptions. Existing exceptions include when there are reasonable grounds to believe disclosure of records could result in a safety risk, including emergency plans and emergency preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation plans (CGS § 1-210(b)(19)).

School security and safety plans, by law, must be based on DESPP standards that include, among other things, (1) an all-hazards approach to emergencies at public schools, (2) crisis management procedures, (3) fire drill and crisis response drill evaluation by local law enforcement and other local public safety officials, and (4) procedures for managing various types of emergencies.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Education Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 44 Nay 0 (03/21/2025)