

## Senate Bill 15

By: Senators Albers of the 56th, Mullis of the 53rd, Dugan of the 30th, Miller of the 49th, Gooch of the 51st and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

1 To amend Article 27 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,  
2 relating to loitering at or disrupting schools, so as to require public and private schools to  
3 have performed certain threat assessments; to provide for definitions; to require every public  
4 and private school to prepare a school safety plan; to revise requirements for the contents of  
5 school safety plans; to require drills upon school safety plans by public and private schools;  
6 to require the officer or agent in charge of the Georgia Information Sharing and Analysis  
7 Center to establish a task force within the center relating to preventing, discovering,  
8 responding to, and recovering from threats, warnings, and developing situations regarding  
9 any public or private school; to provide for the development and maintenance of a program  
10 for training and certifying persons to act as school safety coaches; to amend Article 9 of  
11 Chapter 3 of Title 35 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the Georgia  
12 Information Sharing and Analysis Center, so as to provide for the center's role in preventing,  
13 discovering, responding to, and recovering from threats, warnings, and developing situations  
14 regarding any public or private school; to amend Part 1 of Article 2 of Chapter 5 of Title 48  
15 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to property tax exemptions, so as to  
16 provide for qualifications for a homestead exemption for persons who serve as school safety  
17 coaches; to provide for a short title; to provide for related matters; to provide for an effective  
18 date, a contingent effective date, and automatic repeal; to repeal conflicting laws; and for  
19 other purposes.

20 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:**

21 **SECTION 1.**

22 This Act shall be known and may be cited as the "Keeping Georgia's Schools Safe Act."

23 **SECTION 2.**

24 Article 27 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to  
25 loitering at or disrupting schools, is amended by revising Code Section 20-2-1185, relating  
26 to school safety plans and drills, as follows:

27 "20-2-1185.

28 (a) As used in this Code section, the term:

29 (1) 'Private school' means a nonpublic institution instructing children at any level or  
30 levels, kindergarten through twelfth grade, or children of ages five through 19 if grade  
31 divisions are not used and which is accredited by one or more of the entities listed in  
32 subparagraph (A) of paragraph (6) of Code Section 20-3-519.

33 (2) 'Threat assessment' means conducting an evaluation for purposes of most effectively  
34 responding to, or preventing or reducing, the threat of violence, mass casualty incidents  
35 and other acts of terrorism, natural disasters, and hazardous materials or radiological  
36 accidents.

37 (b)(1) The Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency shall  
38 maintain a list of private persons or agencies approved for purposes of this Code section  
39 to provide threat assessments to public and private schools.

40 (2) By August 1, 2019, or prior to its opening for use by students, and every two years  
41 thereafter, every public school and private school shall have performed a threat  
42 assessment of its buildings, facilities, and campuses by a person or agency approved  
43 pursuant to paragraph (1) of this subsection. Such threat assessment shall inform the  
44 preparation and maintenance of a school safety plan as provided for in subsection (c) of  
45 this Code section.

46 (c) Every public school and private school shall prepare a school safety plan to help curb  
47 the growing incidence of violence in schools, to respond effectively to such incidents, and  
48 to provide a safe learning environment for Georgia's children, teachers, and other school  
49 personnel. Such plan shall also address preparedness for natural disasters, hazardous  
50 materials or radiological accidents, acts of violence, and acts of terrorism. School safety  
51 plans of public schools and private schools shall be prepared with input from students  
52 enrolled in that school, parents or legal guardians of such students, teachers in that school,  
53 community leaders, other school employees and school district employees, and local law  
54 enforcement, juvenile court, fire service, public safety, and emergency management  
55 agencies. As part of such plans, public schools and private schools shall provide for the  
56 coordination with local law enforcement agencies and the local juvenile court system.  
57 School safety plans shall include, at a minimum, the following strategy areas:

58 (1) Training school administrators, teachers, and support staff, including, but not limited  
59 to, school resource officers, security officers, secretaries, custodians, and bus drivers, on

- 60 school violence prevention, school security, school threat assessment, mental health  
 61 awareness, and school emergency planning best practices;
- 62 (2) Evaluating and refining school security measures;
- 63 (3) Updating and exercising school emergency preparedness plans;
- 64 (4) Strengthening partnerships with public safety officials; ~~and~~
- 65 (5) Creating enhanced crisis communications plans and social media strategies;
- 66 (6) Addressing security issues in school safety zones as defined in Code Section  
 67 16-11-127.1;
- 68 (7) Addressing security issues involving school functions held during noninstructional  
 69 hours; and
- 70 (8) Addressing security issues involving the transportation of pupils to and from school  
 71 and school functions when such transportation is furnished by the school or school  
 72 system.

73 ~~School safety plans of private schools may be prepared with input from students enrolled~~  
 74 ~~in that school, parents or legal guardians of such students, teachers in that school, other~~  
 75 ~~school employees, and local law enforcement, fire service, public safety, and emergency~~  
 76 ~~management agencies. Such plans shall be reviewed and, if necessary, updated annually.~~  
 77 ~~Such plans of public schools shall be submitted to the local emergency management agency~~  
 78 ~~and the local law enforcement agency for approval.~~

79 ~~(b)~~(d) A public school may request funding assistance from the state for facilities,  
 80 technology, or other safety improvements or initiatives, such as the installation of safety  
 81 equipment, including, but not limited to, video surveillance cameras, metal detectors,  
 82 alarms, communications systems, building access controls, and other similar security  
 83 devices. The Department of Education shall establish criteria that will be applied in  
 84 reviewing funding requests pursuant to this subsection which shall take into consideration  
 85 the physical security needs of the public school in evaluating how the school safety plan  
 86 and funding request will support such physical security needs. Funding may be provided  
 87 to a public school in accordance with a school safety plan prepared by the school and  
 88 approved by the local board of education, the local law enforcement agency, the  
 89 Department of Education, and the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland  
 90 Security Agency; provided, however, that a public school shall be required to match the  
 91 state funding with local funds unless the school can demonstrate a substantial hardship.

92 ~~(c) School safety plans prepared by public schools shall address security issues in school~~  
 93 ~~safety zones as defined in Code Section 16-11-127.1. School safety plans should also~~  
 94 ~~address security issues involving the transportation of pupils to and from school and school~~  
 95 ~~functions when such transportation is furnished by the school or school system and school~~  
 96 ~~functions held during noninstructional hours.~~

97 ~~(d)~~(e) The Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency shall provide  
 98 training and technical assistance to public school systems, ~~and may provide this same~~  
 99 ~~training and technical assistance to~~ and private school systems and independent private  
 100 schools throughout this state in the area of emergency management and safe school  
 101 operations. This training and technical assistance shall include, but not be limited to, crisis  
 102 response team development, site surveys and safety audits, crisis management planning,  
 103 exercise design, safe school planning, emergency operations planning, search and seizure,  
 104 bomb threat management, and model school safety plans.

105 ~~(e)~~(f) Every public school and private school shall conduct drills with students, teachers,  
 106 and other school personnel on the execution of school safety plans in such form and at such  
 107 intervals based upon guidance from the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland  
 108 Security Agency; provided, however, that drills with students, teachers, and other school  
 109 personnel for responses to fire, weather, acts of violence, and acts of terrorism shall each  
 110 occur at intervals of at least once per school year."

### 111 SECTION 3.

112 Said article is further amended by adding two new Code sections to read as follows:

113 "20-2-1186.

114 (a) The officer or agent charged with operating the Georgia Information Sharing and  
 115 Analysis Center as provided for in Article 9 of Chapter 3 of Title 35 shall establish a task  
 116 force within the center for the purposes of sharing and providing homeland security activity  
 117 information to the director of emergency management and homeland security relating to  
 118 threats, warnings, and developing situations regarding public and private schools in this  
 119 state.

120 (b) To the extent permissible by law, including, but not limited to, the Family Educational  
 121 Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, 20 U.S.C. Section 1232g, such task force shall be  
 122 authorized to curate individual student profiles from school records and records of the  
 123 Department of Human Services and law enforcement agencies for the purpose of  
 124 evaluating potential threats to public and private schools.

125 20-2-1187.

126 (a) The Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency shall develop  
 127 and maintain a program for training and certifying persons to act as school safety coaches  
 128 within public and private schools. Such school safety coaches shall serve as a resource in  
 129 executing the school safety plan and as a presence in identifying safety concerns and  
 130 potential imminent threats for notification of school personnel and any local law  
 131 enforcement agency. Persons certified pursuant to this subsection shall be members or

132 former members of the armed forces of the United States, a law enforcement agency, or a  
 133 fire department or shall be licensed or certified pursuant to Article 3 of Chapter 11 of Title  
 134 31.

135 (b) Public and private schools shall use persons trained or certified pursuant to subsection  
 136 (a) of this Code section to serve as school safety coaches."

137 **SECTION 4.**

138 Article 9 of Chapter 3 of Title 35 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the  
 139 Georgia Information Sharing and Analysis Center, is amended by revising Code Section  
 140 35-3-200, relating to definitions, as follows:

141 "35-3-200.

142 As used in this article, the term:

143 (1) 'Center' means the Georgia Information Sharing and Analysis Center.

144 (2) 'Fusion center' means collaborative effort which combines resources, expertise,  
 145 intelligence, and other information from various agencies of state and local governments  
 146 with the goal of maximizing the ability of this state to detect, prevent, and respond to  
 147 criminal activities or to otherwise engage in homeland security activities.

148 (3) 'Homeland security activity' means any activity related to the prevention or discovery  
 149 of, response to, or recovery from:

150 (A) A terrorist attack;

151 (B) A hostile military or paramilitary action; or

152 (C) An extraordinary law enforcement emergency, as designated by the Governor;  
 153 provided, however, that such emergency shall include the prevention or discovery of,  
 154 response to, or recovery from mass casualty incidents at any public or private  
 155 elementary school, secondary school, or local board of education."

156 **SECTION 5.**

157 Part 1 of Article 2 of Chapter 5 of Title 48 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,  
 158 relating to property tax exemptions, is amended by adding a new Code section to read as  
 159 follows:

160 "48-5-52.2.

161 (a) Pursuant to Article VII, Section II, Paragraph VI of the Constitution, any person who  
 162 is a citizen and resident of Georgia and who serves as a school safety coach with any  
 163 school as provided for in Code Section 20-2-1187 shall be granted a homestead exemption  
 164 from all ad valorem taxation for school purposes in the amount of the full value of the  
 165 property.

166 (b) In order to qualify for the exemption provided for in this Code section, the person  
167 servicing as a school safety coach shall furnish to the tax commissioner of the county of  
168 residence documents from the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security  
169 Agency and school evidencing that such person serves as a school safety coach.

170 (c) Once filed, the homestead exemption granted by this Code section shall automatically  
171 be renewed from year to year, except that the county board of tax assessors may require  
172 annually that the holder of an exemption substantiate his or her continuing eligibility for  
173 the exemption. It shall be the duty of any person granted the homestead exemption under  
174 this Code section to notify the tax commissioner in the event that person for any reason  
175 becomes ineligible for such exemption.

176 (d) The exemptions granted by this Code section shall apply to the tax year beginning on  
177 January 1, 2020, and all tax years thereafter."

178 **SECTION 6.**

179 (a) Except as provided for in subsection (b) of this section, this Act shall become effective  
180 on July 1, 2019.

181 (b) Section 5 of this Act shall become effective on January 1, 2020, only if an amendment  
182 to the Constitution of Georgia is ratified at the November, 2019, general election providing  
183 for a homestead exemption from all ad valorem taxation for school purposes for persons who  
184 serve as school safety coaches. If such an amendment to the Constitution is not so ratified,  
185 such section of this Act shall not become effective and shall stand repealed by operation of  
186 law on January 1, 2020.

187 **SECTION 7.**

188 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.