

By: Thierry

H.B. No. 204

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT
2 relating to requiring school districts and open-enrollment charter
3 schools to provide a landline telephone or panic button in every
4 classroom.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

6 SECTION 1. Sections 37.108(a) and (f), Education Code, are
7 amended to read as follows:

8 (a) Each school district or public junior college district
9 shall adopt and implement a multihazard emergency operations plan
10 for use in the district's facilities. The plan must address
11 prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery as
12 defined by the Texas School Safety Center in conjunction with the
13 governor's office of homeland security and the commissioner of
14 education or commissioner of higher education, as applicable. The
15 plan must provide for:

16 (1) training in responding to an emergency for
17 district employees, including substitute teachers;

18 (2) measures to ensure district employees, including
19 substitute teachers, have classroom access to:

20 (A) a landline telephone or panic button, if the
21 plan applies to a school district, allowing for immediate contact
22 with district emergency services or emergency services agencies,
23 law enforcement agencies, health departments, and fire
24 departments; or

1 (B) a telephone, including a cellular telephone,
2 or another electronic communication device, if the plan applies to
3 a junior college district, allowing for immediate contact with
4 district emergency services or emergency services agencies, law
5 enforcement agencies, health departments, and fire departments;

6 (3) measures to ensure district communications
7 technology and infrastructure are adequate to allow for
8 communication during an emergency;

9 (4) if the plan applies to a school district,
10 mandatory school drills and exercises, including drills required
11 under Section 37.114, to prepare district students and employees
12 for responding to an emergency;

13 (5) measures to ensure coordination with the
14 Department of State Health Services and local emergency management
15 agencies, law enforcement, health departments, and fire
16 departments in the event of an emergency; and

17 (6) the implementation of a safety and security audit
18 as required by Subsection (b).

19 (f) A school district shall include in its multihazard
20 emergency operations plan:

21 (1) a chain of command that designates the individual
22 responsible for making final decisions during a disaster or
23 emergency situation and identifies other individuals responsible
24 for making those decisions if the designated person is unavailable;

25 (2) provisions that address physical and
26 psychological safety for responding to a natural disaster, active
27 shooter, and any other dangerous scenario identified for purposes

1 of this section by the agency or the Texas School Safety Center;

2 (3) provisions for ensuring the safety of students in
3 portable buildings;

4 (4) provisions for ensuring that students and district
5 personnel with disabilities are provided equal access to safety
6 during a disaster or emergency situation;

7 (5) provisions for providing immediate notification
8 to parents, guardians, and other persons standing in parental
9 relation in circumstances involving a significant threat to the
10 health or safety of students, including identification of the
11 individual with responsibility for overseeing the notification;

12 (6) provisions for supporting the psychological
13 safety of students, district personnel, and the community during
14 the response and recovery phase following a disaster or emergency
15 situation that:

16 (A) are aligned with best practice-based
17 programs and research-based practices recommended under Section
18 38.351 [~~161.325, Health and Safety Code~~];

19 (B) include strategies for ensuring any required
20 professional development training for suicide prevention and
21 grief-informed and trauma-informed care is provided to appropriate
22 school personnel;

23 (C) include training on integrating
24 psychological safety and suicide prevention strategies into the
25 district's plan, such as psychological first aid for schools
26 training, from an approved list of recommended training established
27 by the commissioner and Texas School Safety Center for:

1 (i) members of the district's school safety
2 and security committee under Section 37.109;

3 (ii) district school counselors and mental
4 health professionals; and

5 (iii) educators and other district
6 personnel as determined by the district;

7 (D) include strategies and procedures for
8 integrating and supporting physical and psychological safety that
9 align with the provisions described by Subdivision (2); and

10 (E) implement trauma-informed policies;

11 (7) a policy for providing a substitute teacher access
12 to school campus buildings and materials necessary for the
13 substitute teacher to carry out the duties of a district employee
14 during an emergency or a mandatory emergency drill; ~~and~~

15 (8) the name of each individual on the district's
16 school safety and security committee established under Section
17 37.109 and the date of each committee meeting during the preceding
18 year; and

19 (9) certification that the district is in compliance
20 with Section 37.116, which requires each classroom in the district
21 to be equipped with a landline telephone or panic button.

22 SECTION 2. Subchapter D, Chapter 37, Education Code, is
23 amended by adding Section 37.116 to read as follows:

24 Sec. 37.116. REQUIRED CLASSROOM LANDLINE TELEPHONE OR PANIC
25 BUTTON. Each school district and open-enrollment charter school
26 shall provide each classroom in the district or school with a
27 landline telephone or panic button that allows for immediate

1 contact with district emergency services or emergency services
2 agencies, law enforcement agencies, health departments, and fire
3 departments.

4 SECTION 3. This Act applies beginning with the 2023-2024
5 school year.

6 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
7 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
8 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
9 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
10 Act takes effect September 1, 2021.