

CHAPTER 142

AN ACT establishing a School Security Task Force.

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. There is established a School Security Task Force. The purpose of the task force shall be to study and develop recommendations to improve school security and safety, and to ensure a safe learning environment for students and school employees.

2. The task force shall consist of the following 11 members:

a. the Commissioner of Education, the Director of the Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness, and the Chief Executive Officer of the New Jersey Schools Development Authority, or their designees;

b. Eight members who shall be appointed no later than the 30th day after the effective date of this act, as follows:

(1) four members appointed by the Governor, who shall include: one member upon the recommendation of the New Jersey Association of School Business Officials, one member upon the recommendation of the New Jersey Education Association, one member upon the recommendation of the New Jersey School Boards Association, and one member upon the recommendation of the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association; and

(2) four members of the public, two selected by the Governor who have demonstrated expertise in the development or implementation of school security standards or technology, one selected by the President of the Senate, and one selected by the Speaker of the General Assembly.

3. Vacancies in the membership of the task force shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointments were made. Members of the task force shall serve without compensation, but shall be reimbursed for necessary expenditures incurred in the performance of their duties as members of the task force within the limits of funds appropriated or otherwise made available to the task force for its purposes.

4. The task force shall organize as soon as may be practicable after the appointment of its members, but no later than 60 days following the effective date of this act. The task force shall choose a chairperson from among its members, and shall appoint a secretary who need not be a member of the task force.

5. The Department of Education shall provide such stenographic, clerical, and other administrative assistants, and such professional staff, as the task force requires to carry out its work. The task force also shall be entitled to call to its assistance and avail itself of the services of the employees of any State, county, or municipal department, board, bureau, commission, or agency as it may require and as may be available for its purposes.

6. a. The task force shall identify physical and cyber vulnerabilities and potential breaches of security in the public schools, and make recommendations to improve school safety and security. The issues studied by the task force shall include, but are not limited to:

(1) placing screening systems at school entrances;

(2) stationing police officers in each school building;

(3) improving response times to emergency situations, including lockdowns, active shooter, and bomb threats;

- (4) requiring advanced student and visitor identification cards;
- (5) using biometric, retina, or other advanced recognition systems for authorized entrance into school buildings;
- (6) installing panic alarms in school buildings to alert local law enforcement authorities to emergency situations;
- (7) securing computer networks to prevent cyber attacks;
- (8) scheduling periodic patrols of school buildings and grounds by local law enforcement officers; and
- (9) hardening the school perimeter and building entryways.

b. The task force shall review and develop recommendations on building security and assessment standards for existing school facilities and new construction, including, but not limited to, standards for:

- (1) architectural design for new construction;
- (2) assessing and abating security risks in existing school facilities;
- (3) emergency communication plans;
- (4) staff training; and
- (5) addressing elevated risk factors, including proximity to a chemical facility or nuclear power plant.

c. In developing its recommendations, the task force shall: research effective strategies that have been employed in other states; refer to and incorporate existing State research, data, recommendations, and standards, including the School Safety and Security Plans Minimum Requirements set forth by the Department of Education and the September 2007 Final Report of the New Jersey K-12 School Security Task Force; and solicit public input.

d. The task force is authorized, within the limits of funds appropriated or otherwise made available to it for its purpose, to commission professional engineering firms and certified information systems professionals in identifying, interviewing, researching, and documenting security best practices.

7. The task force shall issue a final report within six months after its organizational meeting to the Governor, the State Board of Education, and to the Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), containing its findings and recommendations, including any recommendations for legislation or regulations that it deems appropriate.

8. This act shall take effect immediately and the task force shall expire upon the issuance of the task force final report.

Approved August 16, 2013.