

Dear Superintendents and Principals,

We appreciate your efforts to make all schools safe in Georgia by focusing on prevention, protection, intervention, response, recovery, and school climate.

It is important to remind you of the State Code that requires a Safe School Plan for each school. Specifically, O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1185 states that every public school shall prepare a Safe School Plan *“to provide a safe learning environment for Georgia’s children, teachers, and other school personnel. Such plan shall also address preparedness for natural disasters, hazardous materials or radiological accidents, acts of violence, and acts of terrorism. The plans shall be prepared with input from students enrolled in that school, parents or legal guardians of such students, teachers in that school, community leaders, other school employees, and school district employees, and local law enforcement, juvenile court, fire service, public safety, and emergency management agencies. The Safe School Plan shall include (1) Training school administrators, teachers, and support staff, including, but not limited to, school resource officers, security officers, secretaries, custodians, and bus drivers, on school violence prevention, school security, school threat assessment, mental health awareness, and school emergency planning best practices; (2) Evaluating and refining school security measures; (3) Updating and exercising school emergency preparedness plans; (4) Strengthening partnerships with public safety officials; and (5) Creating enhanced crisis communications plans and social media strategies.”*

To assist school districts and schools, the Georgia Department of Education and Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency worked together to develop a Safe School Plan Template that is detailed and convenient to complete. There is no mandate or requirement to use the Safe School Plan Template; it is offered to assist schools and to remind schools of several safe school planning elements.

We hope the Safe School Plan Template is useful as you work to develop effective Safe School Plans. Please remember that the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency and the Georgia Department of Education are available to assist you with your Safe School Plans and/or review your Safe School Plans or discuss any school safety matters with you.

For more information about school safety and school climate training sessions, please contact either the Georgia Department of Education (Garry McGiboney gmcgiboney@doe.k12.ga.us [678-637-1261])

or the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency (Harlan Proveaux harlan.proveaux@gema.ga.gov [404-694-3468]).

Respectfully,

Richard Woods, State School Superintendent, Georgia Department of Education

Homer Bryson, Director, Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency