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PANIC SYSTEM AND OTHER SECURITY MANDATES FOR SCHOOLS IN OTHER STATES

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You asked if other states, besides Connecticut, require public schools to address school security. Specifically, you wanted to know which states require panic button systems or other similar systems built into school infrastructure and those that require schools to implement security plans.

SUMMARY

We reached out through the National Conference of State Legislature's education staff email network and received responses from 13 states. Of the 13, only Arkansas requires specific security infrastructure for new schools. We found no state that requires panic button systems. As for non-infrastructure requirements, eight states require school security or emergency response plans, and several require other steps such as outside review of the plans. Also, several states have created school safety centers to serve as informational clearinghouses for information on safe schools, security plans, anti-bullying efforts, and youth violence prevention. The states included in this report are: Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Nebraska, Nevada, New York, Oklahoma, Texas, and Washington.

Connecticut requires emergency response drills and requires most major school construction projects to include entryway security infrastructure (for more on Connecticut's requirements, see OLR report [2013-R-0077](#)).

INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS: ARKANSAS

Arkansas requires certain minimum standards for electrical infrastructure and safety system design through its [school facilities manual](#). It also details optional systems that may be funded through the state's building security system allowance and requires certain standards for these options.

The manual requires all districts to include as part of the standard building electrical system conduit rough-in and wiring for key pad locations, motion sensors and control panels. The specific system selection, installation, and funding is the responsibility of the local district and may receive some security system allowance money. The minimum design must include (1) door contact switches at exterior doors and (2) motion detectors distributed throughout corridors, administrative areas, and rooms with six or more computers.

Next, the manual addresses the optional security systems, which it calls upon school districts to "provide as many of the following safety provisions as possible" within that allowance.

The available optional systems in the manual are:

1. A primary access control security system that includes a computer, software, control modules, wiring, readers, and strikes/locks for selected exterior doors. All other doors must have fire-panic hardware for emergency exit, but not for entry.
2. A burglar alarm system for every exterior door and backup motion detection in the corridors to protect from after-hours intrusion and to summon authorities in emergencies. Motion detectors must be installed on all floors and in all rooms with outside access. The alarm system must activate lighting in corridors and other selected areas when triggered.
3. Closed circuit television system must include exterior cameras and adequate cameras in corridors plus a digital recorder, monitors, and related equipment.
4. Pan-zoom-tilt cameras should be considered for external cameras to be mounted in controlled enclosure (pan zoom tilt allows for panning a broader area and zooming in as needed).

For additional information on the Arkansas facilities manual go to the following link:
<http://arkansasfacilities.arkansas.gov/facilities/academic-facilities-manual>.

Other than Arkansas, all of the states in our survey do not require specific security systems in their schools. In most states, much of the decisions related to education are kept at the local level.

NON-INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS

Table 1 below provides the requirements in 10 states regarding school security plans and other non-infrastructure security measures. Three of the state we contacted, Florida, Kentucky, and Washington indicated they do not have any security-related mandates.

Table 1: State Imposed School District Security Mandates

State	Local Mandate				
	School Security or Emergency Response Plans	Local Plan Must Comply with Statewide Policy	Review of Security Plan	Security Infrastructure	Emergency Response Drills
Arizona	√				
Arkansas	√			√	
Colorado	√				
Louisiana	√				
Michigan		√*			
Nebraska	√		√		
Nevada	√				√
New York	√	√	√		√
Oklahoma					√
Texas	√**	√**	√**		
*Michigan does not require a local security plan. But it allows the creation of one, and requires any created to comply with statewide policy.					
**Texas has school safety and security standards. The standards fall short of a state mandate. Rather than using "shall" to indicate a requirement, the standards for example state: "The school district should establish a school safety and security committee"					

SCHOOL SAFETY CENTERS

Several of the states, including Kentucky, Texas, and Washington have created school safety centers that serve as a clearinghouse for school safety information. They often provide training, information on best practices, and other assistance to local school districts. Some review local safety plans or provide security assessments. Many also focus on issues under the broader umbrella of safe schools, such as bullying, illegal drug use, and youth violence.

The following are links to several of these centers:

1. Kentucky: [Kentucky Center for Safe Schools](#)
2. Texas: [Texas School Safety Center](#), and
3. Washington: [Washington School Safety Center](#).

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