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## **OLR Bill Analysis**

### **sHB 7291**

#### ***AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL SECURITY.***

#### **SUMMARY**

This bill requires the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) to (1) update state school security and safety plan standards, (2) simplify certain school security reporting requirements and school security infrastructure grant applications, and (3) develop criteria to identify qualified school security consultants and limit the existing registry to such individuals only. It also adds related duties for the State Department of Education (SDE) and the School Safety Infrastructure Council.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** Upon passage, except the requirements concerning the school security consultants registry are effective October 1, 2019.

#### **SCHOOL SECURITY AND SAFETY PLANS**

By law, each local and regional board of education (“board”) must develop a school security and safety plan for each school within its district and DESPP, in consultation with SDE, must develop standards for these plans (see BACKGROUND). The bill requires DESPP, in consultation with SDE, to reevaluate and update existing school security and safety plan standards every three years, starting by January 1, 2020. It also requires SDE to distribute the standards to all public schools. Under existing law, DESPP must make the standards available to local officials, including the boards, and submit them annually to the Education and Public Safety and Security committees.

By law, boards must annually (1) review, and if necessary update, the school security and safety plans for each school within their districts, and (2) submit them to DESPP. Additionally, under existing law, the school security and safety plan standards must require that (1)

local law enforcement and other local public safety officials evaluate, score, and provide feedback on fire drills and crisis response drills and (2) the boards annually submit reports to DESPP regarding those drills. The bill requires DESPP to evaluate and simplify the reporting requirements these boards must meet regarding their (1) school security and safety plans and (2) fire and crisis response drills. DESPP must submit a report to the Public Safety and Security Committee by January 1, 2020, identifying the essential components for these reports and indicating how the department will simplify the requirements. DESPP must implement the new requirements for them based on its findings by July 1, 2020.

### **SCHOOL SECURITY INFRASTRUCTURE COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM**

By law, boards of education can apply to DESPP, on behalf of their town or member towns, for funds under a competitive state grant program to improve security infrastructure in schools (PA 13-3 § 84). Under the bill, DESPP and the School Safety Infrastructure Council must evaluate and simplify the documentation requirements of applications for those grants. Both DESPP and the council must submit a report to the Public Safety and Security Committee by January 1, 2020, identifying the essential components for these applications and indicating how the department will simplify the requirements. Both DESPP and the council must implement the new requirements based on their findings by July 1, 2020.

### **SCHOOL SECURITY CONSULTANTS**

The bill requires DESPP to (1) develop criteria to identify qualified school security consultants operating in the state and (2) limit its existing school security consultants registry to include only these qualified individuals. (The bill does not provide DESPP with guidance on what must be considered in developing criteria for qualified consultants.) By law, DESPP updates this registry annually, makes it available to the public upon request, and publishes it on the department's website.

### **BACKGROUND**

***School Security and Safety Plans***

The plans must align with DESPP standards, which, among other things, (1) provide an all-hazards approach to handling emergencies at public schools, (2) require involvement of local education and public safety officials, and (3) require the creation of a security and safety committee at each school (CGS § 10-222n).

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Public Safety and Security Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 24    Nay 0    (03/19/2019)