



HOUSE BILL 259: 2023 Appropriations Act, Sec. 7.36: School Safety Grants

2023-2024 General Assembly

Committee:		Date:	December 8, 2023
Introduced by:		Prepared by:	Brian Gwyn Staff Attorney
Analysis of:	Sec. 7.36 of S.L. 2023-134		

OVERVIEW: *Section 7.36 of S.L. 2023-134 provides funding for the School Safety Grants Program (Program) to improve safety in public school units by providing grants for services for students in crisis, school safety training, safety equipment in schools, and subsidizing the School Resource Officer Grants Program through an application process administered by the Superintendent of Public Instruction (Superintendent) in accordance with certain criteria. The grants will be awarded in the following categories:*

- **Students in Crisis Grants** – *In consultation with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), funds to contract with community partners to provide the following crisis services:*
 - *Crisis respite services for parents or guardians of an individual student to prevent more intensive or costly levels of care.*
 - *Training and expanded services for therapeutic foster care families and licensed child placement agencies that provide services to students who need support to manage their health, welfare, and safety and have cognitive or behavioral problems, developmental delays, or aggressive behavior.*
 - *Evidence-based therapy services aligned with targeted training for students and their parents or guardians.*
 - *Other crisis services, including peer-to-peer mentoring, likely to increase school safety.*
- **Training to Increase School Safety Grants** – *In consultation with DHHS, funds to contract with community partners to address school safety by providing training to help students develop healthy responses to trauma and stress. The training must be targeted and evidence-based and can include any of the following:*
 - *Counseling on Access to Lethal Means training for school mental health support personnel, local first responders, and teachers on the topics of suicide prevention and reducing access by students to lethal means.*
 - *Training for school mental health support personnel on comprehensive and evidence-based clinical treatments for students and their parents or guardians.*
 - *Training for students and school employees on community resilience models to improve understanding and responses to trauma and significant stress.*
 - *Training for school mental health support personnel on Modular Approach to Therapy for Children with Anxiety, Depression, Trauma, or Conduct problems.*

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- *Other training, including training on the facilitation of peer-to-peer mentoring, that is likely to increase school safety.*
- *Safety Equipment Grants – In consultation with DHHS, funds for the purchase of safety equipment for school buildings, including charter schools, and training associated with the use of that safety equipment.*
- *Artificial Intelligence (AI) Pilot – The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) must allocate funds to New Hanover County Schools and Davidson County Schools for an AI School Safety Pilot Program that integrates AI technology into existing access controls, alerting protocols, and intercom systems. Participating public school units must report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee (JLEOC) by January 15, 2025, on the implementation and impact of the pilot program.*
- *Subsidizing School Resource Officer Grants Program – If the Superintendent receives applications for grants for school resource officers under G.S. 115C-105.60 in excess of the amount of funding appropriated for school resource officer grants in the 2023-2025 fiscal biennium, the Superintendent can use the funds appropriated to DPI for school safety grants to cover the unmet need for school resource officer grants.*

Nonrecurring funds appropriated to DPI in the 2022-2023 fiscal year for the 2021-2023 School Safety Grants Program and the nonrecurring funds appropriated by this section for the 2023-2025 School Safety Grants Program do not revert and remain available until June 30, 2025.

By April 1 of each year funds are awarded, the Superintendent must report on the Program to the JLEOC, the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services, the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Justice and Public Safety, the Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations, the Senate Appropriations/Base Budget Committee, the House Committee on Appropriations, and the Fiscal Research Division. The report must include the identity of each entity that received a grant, the amount of funding provided, the use of funds, and recommendations for the implementation of additional effective school safety measures.

The provision allowing funds to not revert became effective June 30, 2023, and the remainder of the section became effective October 3, 2023.