

2026 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 624

BY REPRESENTATIVE MIKE JOHNSON

SCHOOLS: Provides relative to emergency operations plans at public schools

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 17:416.16(A)(1)(a) through (c), (2), and (4), (B)(2) and (3), (C),
3 (D)(1), (F), (G)(introductory paragraph), and (J) and 3996(B)(33) and to repeal
4 17:416.16(G)(4) and (5), relative to school emergency operations plans; to provide
5 for plan components; to provide for the personnel participating in the development
6 and execution of the plan; to provide for emergency preparedness activities; to
7 provide for definitions; to revise terminology; and to provide for related matters.

8 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

9 Section 1. R.S. 17:416.16(A)(1)(a) through (c), (2), and (4), (B)(2) and (3), (C),
10 (D)(1), (F), (G)(introductory paragraph), and (J) and 3996(B)(33) are hereby amended and
11 reenacted to read as follows:

12 §416.16. School ~~crisis management and response~~ emergency operations plans

13 A.(1) For the purposes of this Section, the following terms shall have the
14 following meanings:

15 (a) "~~Crisis management and response~~ Emergency operations plan" shall
16 mean a plan to address school safety and the incidence of a shooting or other
17 violence at schools, on school buses, and at school-related activities; to respond
18 effectively to any incidents; and to ensure that every student, teacher, and school
19 employee has access to a safe, secure, and orderly school that is conducive to
20 learning. The plan shall also address the management of any other emergency
21 situation.

1 (b) "District ~~threat assessment~~ safety and emergency team" shall mean a
2 team established by each governing authority of public elementary and secondary
3 schools. The team shall include, at a minimum, the local school superintendent; ~~the~~
4 ~~principal of each school; a person with responsibility over the school facilities; a~~
5 ~~mental health professional employed by the governing authority, or, if the governing~~
6 ~~authority has no such employee, a mental health professional selected by the local~~
7 ~~school superintendent; any school resource officer employed by the governing~~
8 ~~authority; any Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps instructor employed by the~~
9 ~~governing authority; and the emergency preparedness and recovery point of contact.~~
10 a representative from school facilities, transportation, school nutrition, curriculum,
11 student services, athletics, logistics, mental health, medical services, technology, and
12 special education; the emergency response coordinator; the public information
13 officer; and an elementary school principal, middle school principal, and high school
14 principal.

15 (c) "Emergency ~~preparedness and recovery point of contact~~ response
16 coordinator" shall mean a person selected by the local school superintendent ~~to serve~~
17 ~~as a point of contact with local and state officials and the media in the event of an~~
18 ~~emergency. who oversees the development of the emergency operations plan and any~~
19 associated training.

* * *

21 (2)(a) A school ~~crisis management and response~~ emergency operations plan
22 shall be prepared by each public school principal jointly with local law enforcement,
23 fire, public safety, and emergency preparedness officials. The plan shall seek to
24 utilize resources and information available through the Louisiana Commission on
25 School and Nonprofit Security, R.S. 29:726.5 et seq.

26 (b) In preparing or revising the plan, the principal shall consult with the
27 district ~~threat assessment~~ safety and emergency team. The principal and the ~~threat~~
28 ~~assessment~~ team shall determine whether to consider input from students enrolled

1 in the school and their parents, teachers at the school, other school employees, and
2 community leaders.

3 * * *

4 (4) The plan shall provide for an all-hazards approach response plan for
5 emergency events including any event with a hostage, an active ~~shooter~~, assailant,
6 or a building lockdown.

7 * * *

8 B.

9 * * *

10 (2) Notwithstanding the provisions of Paragraph (1) of this Subsection, when
11 conducting the annual review of the ~~crisis management and response~~ emergency
12 operations plan for a high school, the school principal shall seek and consider input
13 from the students enrolled in the school who shall be represented by either the
14 president of the senior class or the president of the student council and at least one
15 other responsible student selected by the principal.

16 (3) ~~The local school superintendent shall make an annual report to the public~~
17 ~~school governing authority on the status of the plan of each school under the~~
18 ~~governing authority's jurisdiction and shall submit a copy of the report to the state~~
19 ~~Department of Education and the Center for Safe Schools provided for in R.S.~~
20 29:276.5.1. Each public school shall complete an annual school safety questionnaire
21 developed and distributed by the Louisiana Center for Safe Schools in partnership
22 with the state Department of Education. The questionnaire shall request information
23 related to the school's compliance with plan requirements, completion of required
24 drills, and identified needs related to emergency response and preparedness. Upon
25 completion of the school-level questionnaire by each school, each public school
26 governing authority shall complete a district-level questionnaire. Both the
27 school-level and district-level questionnaires shall be submitted to the department
28 and the center no later than sixty instructional days into each school year.

1 C.(1) For purposes of planning, training, and evaluation, emergency
2 preparedness activities conducted by a school shall be classified as either
3 discussion-based exercises or operations-based exercises, as follows:

4 (a) Discussion-based exercises are designed to increase understanding of
5 emergency plans, roles, and decisionmaking processes without requiring physical
6 response activities or simulated movement of students or staff. These exercises may
7 include:

8 (i) Orientation or seminars, which introduce emergency plans, roles,
9 responsibilities, and expectations.

10 (ii) Workshops, which are used to develop, review, or refine emergency
11 plans, procedures, or interagency agreements.

12 (iii) Tabletop exercises, in which participants discuss response actions,
13 coordination, and decisionmaking during a simulated emergency scenario.

14 (b) Operations-based exercises are designed to test and validate emergency
15 response procedures through action-based activities. These exercises may include:

16 (i) Drills, which test a single emergency function, such as evacuation,
17 lockdown, or shelter-in-place but which shall not involve the use of blanks,
18 simulated weapons, or the active participation of community emergency response
19 partners reenacting response actions.

20 (ii) Functional exercises, which test command, control, coordination, and
21 communication during a simulated incident and may involve limited participation
22 by community partners reenacting their specific response roles, without full
23 deployment of personnel or equipment.

24 (iii) Full-scale exercises, which involve a simulated emergency scenario
25 using personnel, equipment, and the coordinated participation of all community
26 partners that would be expected to respond to that specific incident.

27 ~~(1)~~ (2) Within the first thirty instructional days of each school year, each
28 public school principal shall conduct a safety drill to rehearse the components of the
29 plan, including an active ~~shooter~~ assailant scenario. In addition, each school year,

1 each principal shall conduct at least one additional drill during high traffic or
2 transition points in the school day. Not later than seven days after each drill, the
3 principal shall submit a written report summarizing the details of the drill to the local
4 school superintendent. The superintendent or emergency response coordinator shall
5 ~~comment~~ provide feedback on the drill to the principal, who shall consider the
6 ~~comments~~ feedback in revising the plan.

7 (2) (3) Each public school principal shall notify all teachers and other school
8 employees regarding revisions made to the plan.

9 D. Each plan shall provide that:

10 (1) The door of each classroom and other instructional space shall be locked
11 and secured to prevent entry into the room when it is occupied by students, except
12 between class periods when students are moving between classrooms and other
13 instructional spaces. If a classroom or other instructional space is left unlocked or
14 open for any other reason, the door shall be actively staffed by an authorized person
15 standing or seated at the door. Classroom doors with locks shall be in compliance
16 with all fire safety standards promulgated by the office of state fire marshal, ~~code~~
17 ~~enforcement and building safety of the Department of Public Safety and Corrections~~
18 ~~and shall remain locked during instructional time.~~ Each plan shall provide that a
19 ~~locked door shall not obstruct egress.~~ For purposes of this Paragraph, "locked and
20 secured" means that no devices or obstacles are present which would prevent the
21 door locking mechanism from being fully engaged as originally designed or
22 intended.

23 * * *

24 F. Each school year, each public school principal shall be responsible for
25 providing ~~in-service training,~~ a workshop, which may be incorporated into a meeting
26 or training session held for another purpose, for all teachers and school employees
27 pertaining to the plan and shall involve local law enforcement, fire, public safety, and
28 emergency preparedness officials in the preparation and presentation of the training.

1 The training shall include an active ~~shooter~~ assailant exercise. The training shall be
2 reported to the local school superintendent and the state Department of Education.

3 G. Each public school principal shall keep a copy of the approved plan in his
4 office. The plan shall be accessible to the state Department of Education and
5 Louisiana Center for Safe Schools upon request. ~~and~~ The principal shall provide a
6 copy to the following individuals, each of whom shall be responsible for keeping in
7 his respective office a copy of the plan that is readily accessible in the event of a
8 school shooting or other violent incident or emergency situation:

9 * * *

10 J. In accordance with R.S. 44:3.1, school ~~crisis management and response~~
11 emergency operations plans shall not be subject to the Public Records Law.

12 * * *

13 §3996. Charter schools; exemptions; requirements

14 B. Notwithstanding any state law, rule, or regulation to the contrary and
15 except as may be otherwise specifically provided for in an approved charter, a
16 charter school established and operated in accordance with the provisions of this
17 Chapter and its approved charter and the school's officers and employees shall be
18 exempt from all statutory mandates or other statutory requirements that are
19 applicable to public schools and to public school officers and employees except for
20 the following laws otherwise applicable to public schools with the same grades:

21 * * *

22 (33) School ~~crisis management and response~~ emergency operations plans,
23 R.S. 17:416.16.

24 * * *

25 Section 2. The Louisiana State Law Institute is directed to alphabetize and renumber
26 the terms defined in R.S. 17:416.16(A)(1) as amended and reenacted by the provisions of
27 Section 1 of Act.

28 Section 3. 17:416.16(G)(4) and (5) are hereby repealed in their entirety.

DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

HB 624 Engrossed

2026 Regular Session

Mike Johnson

Abstract: Revises requirements for school emergency operations plans.

Present law provides for school "crisis management and response" plans. Proposed law instead provides for school "emergency operations" plans. Present law requires local superintendents to report to public school governing authorities on the status of each school's plan. Proposed law instead requires schools and districts to complete school safety questionnaires and submit them to the state Dept. of Education and the La. Center for Safe Schools.

Proposed law requires school emergency preparedness exercises to be classified as either discussion-based exercises or operations-based exercises and gives examples of each.

Present law provides that classroom doors with locks shall be in compliance with all fire safety standards promulgated by the office of state fire marshal. Proposed law retains present law. Present law requires that doors shall remain locked during instructional time and requires that each plan provide that a locked door shall not obstruct egress. Proposed law instead provides that all school classrooms and other instructional spaces must be locked and secured to prevent entry into the room when it is occupied by students, except between class periods. Provides that if a classroom or other instructional space must be left unlocked or open for any other reason, the door must be actively staffed by an authorized person standing or seated at the door.

Present law requires each principal to keep a copy of the approved plan in his office and provide a copy to the president of the local school board, the local school superintendent, the chief of police and local fire chief, the state Dept. of Education, and the La. Center for Safe Schools. Proposed law removes the requirement that he provide a copy to such department and center and instead requires that it be accessible to them on request.

(Amends R.S. 17:416.16(A)(1)(a)-(c), (2), and (4), (B)(2) and (3), (C), (D)(1), (F), (G)(intro. para.), and (J) and 3996(B)(33); Repeals R.S. 17:416.16(G)(4) and (5))