

School Safety Drill Act Talking Points

Why have a School Safety Drill Act?

- School security and safety is a real and serious issue in today's times, affecting all of us. Current laws and regulations fail to clearly define how schools should prepare for emergencies, how many safety drills they should conduct, and who in their communities they should work with to keep their schools safe. As a result, Illinois has some school districts that have great emergency plans and drills, and others where we need serious improvement.
- Post 9/11, Illinois' homeland security leadership has learned that the keys to dealing with any kind of emergency are preparation, relationships and cooperation. This new Act will, for the first time, apply the lessons learned from Illinois' homeland security efforts and provide effective guidance to schools on which types of safety drills they should conduct, how many drills they should conduct, who those drills should be performed with, and how they should review their emergency response plans with first responders.
- It will also work to forge productive relationships between school officials and their first responder partners.

Who helped to craft this bill?

- At the Governor's direction, the Illinois Terrorism Task Force (ITTF), the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and the Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM), brought together a diverse group of organizations to craft this agreed-upon legislation.
- In addition to the ITTF, ISBE and OSFM, the following organizations directly consulted, and substantively contributed, to the crafting of this bill: the Illinois School Boards Association (IASB), the Illinois Principals Association (IPA), the Chicago Public Schools (CPS), the Illinois Fire Services Association (IFSA), the IL Fire Chiefs Association (IFCA), the Illinois Law Enforcement Alarm System (ILEAS), the Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), the Illinois Education Association (IEA), and the Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents (IARS).
- In addition, Wheaton Warrenville School District and the Chief of Security for the Illinois Math & Science Academy consulted on the bill.

Who supports this bill?

- Supporters of this bill include: The Governor's Office, ITTF, ISBE, OSFM, IFSA, IFCA, ILEAS, IACP, IEA, and IARSS.

<p><u>Streamlining and Consolidating The Code</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The School Safety Drill Act will consolidate all the rules related to school safety drills into one, streamlined set of statutes and regulations. ▪ There are currently seven different statutes, and related regulations, that try to define how schools should do safety drills. They are unclear and often conflicting. ▪ <i>For example</i>, by statute, schools are required to conduct a minimum 3 fire drills (105 ILCS 5/10-20.22 (2005)), but by regulation, they are required to conduct 1 fire drill per month, or up to 10 drills (41 Ill. Adm. Code 110.20 (2005)).
<p><u>Clearly Defining Safety Drills for Schools</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The School Safety Drill Act will, for the first time, clearly define the types of drills that schools should conduct, and the situations those drills should account for, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Evacuation Drills (e.g. fire, bus, haz mat) ○ Law Enforcement Drills (e.g. shooters, bomb threats) ○ Severe Weather and Shelter-in-Place (e.g. tornados, WMD) ▪ Current laws and regulations fail to clearly define for educators and first responders the specific types of drills schools should account and what types of situations those drills should prepare for. ▪ These new definitions are designed to make sense to both school officials and first responders, ensuring both speak a common language on emergency response.
<p><u>Clearly Defining Numbers of Drills and Drill Participants</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Current law requires from 3 to 10 fire, 2 bus evacuation, and an undefined number of tornado drills. <i>That's as many as 6 to 13 drills per year.</i> ▪ The new School Safety Drill Act would require: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A minimum of 3 fire drills, with one requiring the participation of local fire departments. ○ A minimum of 1 bus evacuation drill. ○ A minimum of 1 tornado drill. ○ One law enforcement drill. ○ <i>That's a clearly defined total of 5 drills, anywhere from 1 to 8 less drills than previously required.</i> ▪ By requiring the participation of the local fire department in at least one fire drill, and encouraging at least one law enforcement drill, the new Act will work to foster the relationships and cooperation between schools and first responders that are vital to effectively dealing with emergencies.
<p><u>An Annual Review of Emergency Response Plans</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The School Safety Drill Act will ensure that once a year, school officials and first responders meet to review emergency response and drill plans. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ School officials will invite local first responders to take part in the annual review. At the end of the review, the school district will send a simple, one-page, check-off format document to their regional superintendent, and in-turn, to ISBE and OSFM, that summarizes their review and goals for the coming year.
<p><u>Cooperation Between ISBE and OSFM</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The School Safety Drill Act will require that ISBE and OSFM cooperate in crafting clear and definitive rules on school safety drills, and a new, up-to-date guide to school emergency response planning.