

Date of Hearing: April 28, 2025

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Rhodesia Ransom, Chair

AB 598 (Gipson) – As Amended March 17, 2025

SUBJECT: School safety: School Mapping Data Grant Program

SUMMARY: Establishes the School Mapping Data Grant Program, to be administered by Cal OES, upon appropriation, to provide one-time grants to participating local educational agencies (LEA) to contract with school mapping data vendors. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Establishes the School Mapping Data Grant Program to be administered by Cal OES, upon appropriation.
- 2) Authorizes Cal OES to provide one-time grants to participating local educational agencies (LEA) to contract with school mapping data vendors.
- 3) Requires Cal OES to determine the data requirements of a school mapping data program eligible for this program's grant funding.
- 4) Requires an LEA that receives a grant to, in collaboration with local public safety agencies, select a school mapping data program that meets criteria established by Cal OES and the needs of public safety agencies and participating schools.
- 5) Authorizes Cal OES to expend up to 5 percent of any appropriation or this program on its administrative costs to implement and administer the grant program.
- 6) Requires this program be implemented only if an appropriation is made by the Legislature for this purpose.
- 7) Declares the intent of the Legislature that the grant funding provided be used to establish a single and verified source of school mapping data, for each participating school, that is standardized, accurate, and accessible to public safety agencies for purposes of ensuring efficient responses to on-campus emergencies at the school.
- 8) Defines the following terms for the purposes of this program:
 - a. "Local educational agency" means a school district, county office of education (COE), or charter school;
 - b. "Public safety agency" means a local, state, or federal agency that provides emergency public safety services to participating schools;
 - c. "School mapping data" or "data" means information provided to assist public safety agencies in efficiently responding to on-campus emergencies at participating schools; and
 - d. "School" means a school maintained by an LEA.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Establishes in state government, within the Office of the Governor, Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES). Requires Cal OES to be under the supervision of the Director of Emergency Services, who has all rights and powers of a head of an office and is referred to as the Director of Emergency Services. (Government Code (GC) 8550)
- 2) Requires Cal OES to be responsible for the state's emergency and disaster response services for natural, technological, or man-made disasters and emergencies, including responsibility for activities necessary to prevent, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the effects of emergencies and disasters to people and property. (GC 8550)
- 3) Provides each county be required to submit their local emergency plans, and each subsequent update, to the Governor's Office of Emergency Services. (GC 8593.3.2)
- 4) Requires Cal OES to, on or before January 1, 2023, review the plans of at least 10 counties at high risk for natural disasters. Each year after, Cal OES must review at least 10 counties emergency plans. By January 1, 2028, Cal OES must have completed a review of the plans from all counties. (GC 8593.3.2)
- 5) Requires each school district and COE to be responsible for the overall development of all comprehensive school safety plans for its schools operating kindergarten or any of grades 1 through 12, and specifies that the school site council or a school safety planning committee is responsible for developing the comprehensive school safety plan. (Education Code (EC) 32281)
- 6) Requires that the comprehensive school safety plan include an assessment of the current status of school crime committed on school campuses and at school-related functions and identification of appropriate strategies and programs to provide or maintain a high level of school safety, and address the school's procedures for complying with existing laws related to school safety, including, but not limited to, disaster procedures; an earthquake emergency procedure system; policies regarding pupils who commit specified acts that would lead to suspension or expulsion; procedures to notify teachers of dangerous pupils; procedures for safe ingress and egress of pupils, parents, and school employees to and from school; a safe and orderly environment conducive to learning; and procedures for conducting tactical responses to criminal incidents, including procedures related to individuals with guns on school campuses and at school-related functions. (EC 32282)
- 7) Requires the school site council to consult with a representative from a law enforcement agency, a fire department, and other first responder entities in the writing and development of the comprehensive school safety plan. Requires the comprehensive school safety plan and any updates to the plan to be shared with the law enforcement agency, the fire department, and the other first responder entities. (EC 32281)
- 8) Authorizes the portions of a school safety plan that include tactical responses to criminal incidents to be developed by school district or COE administrators in consultation with law enforcement officials and with a representative of an exclusive bargaining unit of school district or COE employees, if they choose to participate. Authorizes the school district or

COE to elect not to disclose those portions of the comprehensive school safety plan that include tactical responses to criminal incidents. (EC 32281)

- 9) Defines “tactical responses to criminal incidents” as steps taken to safeguard pupils and staff, to secure the affected school premises, and to apprehend the criminal perpetrators. (EC 32281)
- 10) Requires the petition to establish a charter school to include the development of a school safety plan with specified safety topics, including procedures for conducting tactical responses to criminal incidents. (EC 47605 and 47605.5)

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown. A fiscal committee has not heard this bill.

COMMENTS:

Purpose for this bill: According to the author, “AB 2816 will ensure safety on our K-12 campuses by providing our first responders with the technology and tools necessary to navigate the campus in the event of an emergency. In situations of life and death, every second matters. We need to provide emergency school mapping technology for our state’s first responders to efficiently navigate and communicate, through an unfamiliar building. It is time to keep our children safe.”

Equity Statement: According to the author’s staff, “Many schools in low-income communities already struggle with resources and, unfortunately, often underperform. Research shows that schools shootings negatively impacts student achievement and campus enrollment. This bill would at least address an issue with the ability of first responders to, for example, address school shootings in a more efficient manner, in real time, on campuses, thus lessening the impact of schools shootings.”

Cal OES Grants: Cal OES Grants Management oversees roughly \$1.3 billion in funding that supports a wide range of programs, including homeland security, emergency management, victim services, and criminal justice. According to Cal OES, most of this funding goes directly to local and regional agencies to help strengthen their ability to prevent, respond to, and recover from emergencies and threats in the most effective way possible.

Active Shooters: The terms "active killer" or "active shooter" are used to define a type of mass murder marked by rapidity, scale, randomness and suicide. The United States Department of Homeland Security defines the active shooter as "an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and populated area. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) defines an active shooter incident "as one or more individuals actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a populated area."

Aligning Comprehensive School Safety Plans with the State Emergency Plan: The California Department of Education (CDE) is responsible for establishing the requirements for Comprehensive School Safety Plans (CSSPs), which are designed to promote the safety and security of students and school personnel. Concurrently, the California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) maintains the State Emergency Plan (SEP), which serves as a foundational framework to ensure coordination among state, local, tribal, and federal agencies, as

well as the private sector, in mitigating, preparing for, responding to, and recovering from disasters and emergencies. The SEP provides a standardized and scalable approach to incident management across all hazards and levels of complexity. By understanding this framework while planning and executing their CSSP, schools will work more effectively with local first responders on providing a coordinated response when disasters of any kind strike.

To support school districts and schools in understanding and implementing these systems, Cal OES and CDE jointly released *California Emergency Management for Schools: A Guide for Districts and Sites*. This guide offers practical direction on the role of schools and school districts within the state's emergency management framework.

Committee staff acknowledges the unfortunate reality that even the most robust planning efforts cannot prevent active shooter incidents. However, in the continued absence of broader federal action that addresses the increasing number of these incidents, improved coordination remains one of the most effective steps available to help save lives and reduce harm during these tragic events.

State and Local Active Shooter Preparedness: The Governor's Office of Emergency Services, law enforcement agencies and others have actively planned and prepared to respond to active shooter events, as well as prepared resources such as Cal OES's Active Shooter Awareness Guide. Police, sheriffs, fire departments, EMS providers, schools, universities and colleges, hospitals and other health care settings, and others routinely plan and hold cooperative exercises to practice responding to active shooting incidents.

The California Department of Education has a Crisis Preparedness and Response program that provides training, resources and technical assistance in preparedness for, immediate response to, and mitigation of the aftermath of school safety crises. Local governments provide active shooter training and instruction for employees and citizens. The federal Department of Homeland Security and the FBI are also involved in training and assistance for local and state partners.

School Shooting Events and Statistics: Since the Columbine High School attack in 1999, where two students killed 12 students and one teacher and wounded 21 others, active shooter events captured a substantial amount of public and law enforcement attention. While school shootings continued in the years that followed, the issue gained renewed urgency after the 2012 tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary in Connecticut, where 26 people — including 20 children and six teachers — were killed. This tragedy pushed the debate over gun control into the national spotlight, but led to few changes in federal law — a debate that remains ongoing today.

According to the K-12 School Shooting Database, a database that tracks when a gun is brandished, fired, or a bullet strikes school property for any reason, the number of incidents never exceeded 60 in a single year until 2018. That year, coinciding with the tragic shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Florida that left 17 people dead, the number of incidents rose sharply to 119. The database then recorded 124 incidents in 2019, 116 in 2020, and a significant increase to 257 in 2021. In 2022, the total surpassed 300 for the first time — the same year as the deadly shooting at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, where 19 students and two teachers were killed. The database recorded 308 incidents in 2022, followed by 349 in 2023 and 332 in 2024.

The number of K-12 school shooting victims — including those injured or killed — also began to rise sharply after 2017, when there were 71 reported victims. The only exception was in 2020, largely due to school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic. The database reports 159 victims in 2018, 119 in 2019, 74 in 2020, 189 in 2021, 273 in 2022, 249 in 2023, and 267 in 2024. Everytown Research and Policy has reported 44 incidents of gunfire on school grounds nationwide, resulting in 12 deaths and 36 injuries, since the beginning of this year. This number is tragically expected to increase.

Issues Facing Active Shooter Preparation and Response: Attacks often end before law enforcement can arrive. In a majority of cases when the attacks that were still ongoing when law enforcement arrived, force had to be used stop the killing. Active shooter events are typically of short duration and are often over within 10 to 15 minutes. How effectively law enforcement responds to an event is not only a matter of a quick and immediate response, it is the ability to bring a prepared plan involving multiple agencies to the scene in comprehensive and coordinated manner. This can only be accomplished by working together prior to an event and by preparing and practicing that response.

Additionally, EMS entry or bringing medical care to the site of an attack is sometimes delayed because law enforcement must conduct a thorough search of the scene in order to declare it secure. The inability to quickly bring emergency medical services personnel to an active shooter scene to save lives has caused a paradigm shift in law enforcement training and tactics. Past active shooter incidents underscored the need for a coordinated response by all responding agencies including EMS personnel. Law enforcement continues to work to reduce the time emergency medical personnel can get to the scene to render aid in a variety of ways. Many SWAT teams have members of the team who are paramedics who can provide treatment on the scene quickly. Law enforcement agencies have also developed protocols in active shooter situations where paramedics and other medical assistance can be brought to scene sooner than in past events.

Data Sharing Today: Since the Columbine shooting in 1999, it's become standard practice for schools to provide building maps or blueprints to local law enforcement to help guide emergency response. These documents are often relied upon by police, fire, and EMS during school-related incidents. However, when these maps may become outdated, response times can be negatively impacted.

Following the Uvalde school shooting, several states are modernizing this practice by creating digital campus maps designed specifically for emergency response. According to news reports, high costs — often up to \$5,000 per map, a lack of awareness among school administrators, and the lack of research into the effectiveness of digital mapping systems remain major challenges to adoption.

School Mapping and Cybersecurity Concerns: According to the Assembly Privacy and Consumer Protection Committee:

“ No one can disagree that, in the event of a catastrophe such as a school shooting, a fire, or an earthquake, real-time information from a school site would be invaluable in saving lives. But the provision of such information should be considered in light of very real cybersecurity risks presented.

As has been repeatedly and recently shown, public entities possess significant cybersecurity vulnerabilities, and are consequently vulnerable to cyberattack. The same is true of private companies that provide technology services to public entities. For example, security researchers recently found an unsecured U.S. Department of Defense server, hosted in Microsoft's government cloud service, which exposed sensitive emails on the public internet. (Whittaker, 2023). In other words, one of the country's most sophisticated technology companies and its most well-funded federal agency were unable to ensure cybersecurity of sensitive information. Closer to home, security researchers found that the company implementing California digital license plates, as authorized by AB 984, Chap. 746, Stats. 2022, had a security vulnerability "giving access to GPS location and all information of registered users: this info includes 'vehicles people owned, their physical address, phone number, and email address.'" (Rodríguez, 2023). Luckily, in both of these cases, the companies involved were able to close the identified vulnerabilities before they were hacked. But other entities have not been so fortunate. (Jones, 2023).

It stands to reason that school districts, software providers, and law enforcement agencies involved in implementing this bill could be hacked. Such a hack might allow a school shooter to glean information about school vulnerabilities that could facilitate a more-deadly attack. None of this is to say that the cybersecurity risks involved outweigh the benefits of the bill; simply, that they ought to be considered in order to ensure a complete assessment of the bill's strengths and weaknesses."

Arguments in support: The Critical Response Group, sponsors of the bill, write "Tragic events across the country have demonstrated the dire consequences of delayed emergency response due to inaccurate or inaccessible school maps. AB 598 provides a proven, life-saving solution. This legislation aligns California with national best practices, as 11 states have already enacted similar laws requiring standardized digital school mapping to improve emergency response. Studies show that accurate, room-level school mapping can reduce emergency response times by 4 to 17 minutes, significantly improving outcomes in critical situations.

By establishing a statewide school mapping standard and ensuring compatibility with existing public safety software, AB 598 will eliminate critical gaps in emergency preparedness; ensure all schools—regardless of location or funding—have access to these life-saving tools; and provide first responders with the most up-to-date, standardized facility maps at no cost to schools or emergency agencies."

Arguments in Support if Amended: The California Chapter National Emergency Number Association (CALNENA) writes in support, if amended, " While CALNENA appreciates your intentions with respect to this bill, we believe that the process would be strengthened by requiring that the California Office of Emergency Services (CalOES) consult with the State 9-1-1 Advisory Board (an existing, gubernatorial appointed body), comprised of representatives from law enforcement, fire, CHP, and 9-1-1 dispatch professionals. This ensures that the data requirements benefit from the expertise of first responders who will be responsible for interacting with and using the mapping data proposed under the bill to provide emergency response to fires, health emergencies, first person shooters, and other real-world scenarios."

Related Legislation:

AB 2816 (Gipson) of the 2023-24 Session was substantively similar to this bill. It was held in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

AB 960 (Mathis) Chapter 528, Statutes of 2024, encourages public schools, including charter schools, with an enrollment of 100 pupils or more to implement a web-based or app-based school safety program that includes specified parameters. Also requires that, if a school implements a web-based or app-based school safety program, the school ensure that best practices are implemented to protect the security and data of all pupils and staff, and requires that specified information in the program be exempt from disclosure requirements.

SB 671 (Portantino), Chapter 626, Statutes of 2023, requires the safety plans of LEAs, COEs, and charter schools to include procedures to assess and respond to reports of any dangerous, violent, or unlawful activity that is being conducted or threatened to be conducted at the school, at an activity sponsored by the school, or on a school bus serving the school.

SB 643 (Wilk) of the 2023-24 Session would have established the School Safety Division within the CDE and required the division to administer the Safe-To-Tell Program to receive anonymous reports of dangerous, violent, or unlawful activity. Would also have required LEAs to establish school-based teams of at least three members of the administrative staff at each of its schools to receive notice of reports, and requires the Safe-to-Tell advisory committee to provide an annual report to the Governor and Legislature. This bill was held in the Assembly Education Committee.

AB 1888 (Flora) of the 2021-22 Session would have required the City of Fresno and the Fresno Unified School District, in collaboration with the California College and University Police Chiefs Association, to establish a pilot real-time active shooter and mass emergency coordinated response program for LEAs, community colleges, and the California State University Fresno, to provide a real-time cross-agency communication solution. This bill was held in the Assembly Education Committee.

AB 1499 (Flora) of the 2019-20 Session would have required the California OES to create a new grant program for communication interoperability systems (systems that allow emergency responders and schools to better communicate with each other) on the campuses of K-12 schools, community colleges, and public colleges and universities. This bill was held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

AB 1747 (Rodriguez), Chapter 806, Statutes of 2018, expands the required elements of school safety plans, to include procedures to respond to active shooter situations; requires schools to conduct annual active shooter drills; and requires the CDE to provide additional guidance and oversight of safety plans.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Alameda County Office of Education
California Police Chiefs Association
Critical Response Group, INC
Los Angeles County Office of Education
United Administrators of Southern California (UASC)

Support if Amended

California Chapter National Emergency Number Association (CALNENA)

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