



To the Administrator Addressed

Commissioner Mike Morath

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DATE:	November 3, 2022
SUBJECT:	School Safety Standards
CATEGORY:	Information
NEXT STEPS:	Share with appropriate leadership, facility, and safety staff

Overview

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the Texas School Safety Center (TxSSC) are committed to supporting local educational agencies (LEAs) in their efforts to improve the safety and security of school facilities for staff, students, and visitors. On [June 2](#), Governor Abbott charged the Commissioner of Education with rule development to ensure existing school facilities are held to heightened safety standards, and to determine costs of more secure facilities in schools. On [October 3](#), Governor Abbott announced the hiring of TEA’s Chief of School Safety and Security, John P. Scott, formerly of the US Secret Service. With these charges and the [recent announcement](#) of \$400M in additional school safety funding from Governor Abbott, Lieutenant Governor Patrick, and Speaker Phelan, this correspondence is to inform LEAs of the proposed School Safety Standards Rule and state-funded grant opportunities and provides information on the Silent Panic Alert Technology Grant now available.

School Safety Standards Rule

In light of recent events, ongoing public concern, and the charge by Governor Abbott, the Commissioner, as authorized by TEC, §7.061 and 37.115(b), is proposing §61.1031 to address school safety and ensure minimum school safety standards to address the safety of students and staff alike in our public schools. The proposed rule would require that all school system instructional facilities have access points that are secured by design, maintained to operate as intended, and appropriately monitored. Specific rule text will be available via the Texas Register soon and is preliminarily posted on TEA’s website here: [Proposed amendment to 19 Texas Administrative Code \(TAC\) Chapter 61, School Districts, Subchapter CC, Commissioner’s Rules Concerning School Facilities, §61.1031, School Safety Requirements](#).

TEA has also created a one-page summary of the rule available here: [School Safety Standards Overview document](#).

Grant Opportunities

2023-2025 School Safety Standards Formula Grant

TEA will release a formula-based grant application in the coming weeks to support the school safety standards proposed rules referenced above. The grant will allow for pre-award for items purchased on or after June 1, 2022.

[Allocation Methodology](#)

This grant program will calculate formula allocations based on a per-pupil amount per LEA. Grant funds will be distributed by per-pupil counts that were derived from age 3-21 student enrollment as reported in the October 2021 PEIMS submission. There will be a \$200,000 grant allocation for smaller and rural LEAs, even if using the per-pupil methodology they would receive less than the \$200,000 minimum grant award.

Eligibility Criteria

Public school districts and charter schools with a reported enrollment of at least one student from the October 2021 PEIMS fall snapshot submission will be eligible for funding. New charter schools that opened in the 2022-2023 school year, prior to October 27, 2022, will be eligible for the minimum grant award amount. Any new charter school opening after October 27, 2022 (the date of announcement from Office of the Governor) will be ineligible for funding throughout the life of the grant. Private schools are not eligible recipients for funding.

Allowable Uses

The grant will allow spending on a variety of security-related items identified by the needs of each LEA. The grant will allow for various costs associated with school safety and security; however, the grant will come with a requirement that money must first be spent on items necessary to comply with the rule. Once the standards of the rule are met, remaining funds can be spent on other eligible security-related costs as defined in the grant program allowable costs [LINK].

For more information, LEAs should review the allocation funding, allowable costs, and grant links listed below.

- School Safety Formula Grant Allocation Funding
 - [Allocation by LEA](#)
 - [Allocation by ESC](#)
- [School Safety Formula Grant Allowable Costs](#)
- The grant application will be available on the [TEA Grant Opportunities page](#).
- See the [School Safety Related Grant Programs webpage here](#).

2022-2024 Silent Panic Alert Technology Grant

TEA released a formula grant program on October 28, 2022, to provide grant funds to LEAs to purchase silent panic alert technologies for campuses as a measure of school safety. Silent panic alert technology is generally defined as a silent system signal generated by the activation of a device, either manually or through software applications, intended to signal a life-threatening or emergency situation (such as an active shooter, intruder, or other emergency situation) requiring a response from law enforcement and/or other first responders.

The grant funds support an alarm system as described in the proposed School Safety Standards Rule. The rule describes this as part of a school system communications infrastructure, which shall include a panic alert button, duress, or equivalent alarm system, via standalone hardware or integrated into other telecommunications devices, that includes the following functionality:

- A. an alert capable of being triggered manually by campus staff;

- B. an alert is triggered automatically in the event a district employee calls 911 from any location within the school system;
- C. with any alert generated, the location of where the alert originated shall be included;
- D. the alert notifies a set of designated school administrators as needed to provide confirmation of response, and if confirmed, notice is issued to law enforcement and emergency responder agencies of an emergency situation requiring a law enforcement and/or emergency response, and a notice can simultaneously be issued to all school staff of the need to follow appropriate emergency procedures; and
- E. for any exterior doors that features electronic locking mechanisms that allow for remote locking, the alert system will trigger those doors to automatically lock and to automatically notify relevant campus staff of any door where the lock cannot engage.

For more information, LEAs should review the allocation funding and grant links listed below.

- Grant allocations are posted on the [Grant Entitlements webpage](#).
- The grant application is available on the [TEA Grant Opportunities page](#).
 - NOTE: You must be an authorized eGrants system user to access the application.
- See the [School Safety Related Grant Programs webpage here](#).

Additional Information on School Safety:

School safety resources are posted at the [School Safety Resource Page](#).

If you have any questions, please contact safeschools@tea.texas.gov.