

§ 115C-105.57. Center for Safer Schools.

(a) Center for Safer Schools Established. – There is established the Center for Safer Schools. The Center for Safer Schools shall be administratively located in the Department of Public Instruction. The Center for Safer Schools shall consist of an Executive Director appointed by the Superintendent of Public Instruction and such other professional, administrative, technical, and clerical personnel as may be necessary to assist the Center for Safer Schools in carrying out its powers and duties.

(b) Executive Director. – The Executive Director shall report to and serve at the pleasure of the Superintendent of Public Instruction at a salary established by the Superintendent within the funds appropriated for this purpose.

(c) Powers and Duties. – The Center for Safer Schools shall have the following duties, and all other powers and duties provided in this Article:

- (1) Serve as a resource and referral center for the State by conducting research, sponsoring workshops, and providing information regarding current school safety concerns.
- (2) Provide training, resources, and professional development for students, public school personnel, first responders, social services agencies, members of the community, and other interested parties, as needed, on at least the following topics related to school safety:
 - a. Responsibilities and best practices of school resource officers.
 - b. Youth mental health, including applicable policies and plans adopted by the State Board of Education and public school units in accordance with G.S. 115C-376.5.
 - c. Threat assessment and threat assessment teams, including development of guidance pursuant to G.S. 115C-105.65(b).
 - d. Active-shooter drills and scenarios.
 - e. Incident de-escalation.
 - f. Reunification of schools and school districts after an incident.
 - g. Information related to at least the following areas:
 1. Bullying.
 2. Suicide.
 3. Opioid and substance abuse.
 4. Critical incidents.
 5. Trauma and victimization among students.
 6. The impacts of the incidents identified in sub-sub-subdivisions 1. through 5. of this sub-subdivision on school climate and school safety.
- (3) Maintain and disseminate information to public schools on effective school safety initiatives in North Carolina and across the nation.
- (4) Collect, analyze, and disseminate various North Carolina school safety data.
- (5) Provide technical and instructional assistance to facilitate the development of partnerships between the public and private sectors to promote school safety in North Carolina.
- (6) Recommend a system of accountability to the General Assembly to document school safety exercises, including practice school lockdowns, required by G.S. 115C-105.49.
- (7) Assist law enforcement officers assigned to schools and their agencies in active shooter response drills and other pertinent school safety-related training.

- (8) Collaborate with the North Carolina Justice Academy, the North Carolina Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission, and the North Carolina Sheriffs' Education and Training Standards Commission to establish and maintain updated training curriculum for school resource officers.
- (9) Coordinate grants for school resource officers in elementary and middle schools and ensure that training requirements for school resource officers funded by those grants are met.
- (10) Provide technical assistance to public school units in the development and implementation of initiatives promoting school safety.

(d) Agency Cooperation. – All State agencies and departments shall cooperate with the Center for Safer Schools in carrying out its powers and duties, as necessary, in accordance with this Article. The Center for Safer Schools shall coordinate, collaborate, and seek information as necessary to carry out its duties and responsibilities from State and local government agencies, who shall provide information upon request to the Center. These agencies include the following:

- (1) Department of Public Safety.
- (2) Department of Health and Human Services.
- (3) Department of Public Instruction.
- (4) North Carolina Justice Academy.
- (5) Governor's Crime Commission.
- (6) State Bureau of Investigation Fusion Center, Information Sharing, and Analysis Center.
- (7) Governing bodies of public school units.
- (8) Local law enforcement agencies.

(e) Annual Census of School Resource Officers. – The Center for Safer Schools shall conduct an annual census of school resource officers located in each public school unit. As part of the census, each public school unit shall report to the Center by January 15 of each year with the following information regarding school resource officers in the unit:

- (1) The total number of school resource officers.
- (2) Data regarding school resources officers' education levels, years as sworn law enforcement officers, and years as school resource officers.
- (3) Training required of school resource officers and training actually completed by school resource officers, including training specific to the position of school resource officer and other advanced or additional training.
- (4) The funding source for all school resource officers.
- (5) The location of school resource officers, differentiated by grade levels.
- (6) The percentage of school resource officers assigned to more than one school.
- (7) The law enforcement affiliation of school resource officers.

The Center shall compile the information submitted pursuant to this subsection and submit a report detailing this information at the statewide and local levels to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee and the State Board of Education by March 1 of each year.

(f) Task Force Guidance. – The Center for Safer Schools shall receive guidance and advice from the Task Force for Safer Schools. (2018-97, s. 2.4(d); 2019-222, s. 2.1; 2021-180, s. 7.30(a); 2023-78, ss. 1, 2(b).)