

HOUSE BILL 1627

By Lynn

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49,
relative to school safety.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 6, Part 8, is amended by
adding the following as a new section:

(a)

(1) The department of education shall award school safety grants to LEAs, public charter schools, private schools, and church-related schools for the purchase of a wearable emergency alert system for teachers and substitute teachers employed by the school or school system.

(2)

(A) Subject to subdivision (a)(2)(B), each grant awarded by the department must provide the receiving school or school system up to three hundred dollars (\$300) for each emergency device unit purchased by the school or school system for each teacher employed by the school or school system, and for five (5) additional emergency device units for substitute teachers employed by the school or school system.

(B) The department shall not award a grant to an individual school that exceeds fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000), nor shall the department award a grant to a school system that exceeds fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) for each public school that is managed and controlled by the school system's local board of education.

(3) The department shall award grants for purposes of this section using funds appropriated to the department for the issuance of school safety grants, including any funds available to the department from appropriations made to the department on or before July 1, 2023, for school safety grants.

(b) To receive grant funds, the school or school system must contract with a vendor for the provision of compact emergency devices that may be worn by the school's or school system's teachers and substitute teachers on a lanyard worn around the teacher's or substitute teacher's neck that:

(1) Are each individually programmed to identify only the teacher or substitute teacher to whom it is assigned and who is required to wear the device at all times while performing the duties of their position on the grounds of the school at which the teacher or substitute teacher is assigned;

(2) Are equipped with:

(A) GPS capabilities to allow the teacher's or substitute teacher's exact location to be identified when the teacher or substitute teacher activates the device by pressing a button on the device to alert the school's or school system's administration of an emergency situation occurring on school grounds;

(B) Audio transmitting and recording capabilities to allow the school's or school system's administration and first responders to receive a real-time audio feed of the emergency situation occurring on school grounds to assist school administrators, law enforcement officers, or emergency medical services personnel in responding to the situation; and

(C) Video transmitting and recording capabilities to allow the school's or school system's administration and first responders to receive

a real-time video feed of the emergency situation occurring on school grounds to assist school administrators, law enforcement officers, or emergency medical services personnel in responding to the situation; and

(3) Each contain three (3) color-coded emergency buttons that are easily identifiable and activated in emergency situations. Each device must contain:

(A) One (1) button that, when activated, alerts the school's or school system's administration of a discipline issue occurring on school grounds requiring the immediate assistance of the school principal, school resource officer, and any other school security or safety officer present on school grounds;

(B) One (1) button that, when activated, alerts the school's or school system's administration of a medical issue or other emergency occurring on school grounds requiring the immediate assistance of the school principal, school nurse, and any other medical personnel present on school grounds and that immediately alerts emergency medical services personnel and each local fire department with jurisdiction of a medical or other emergency situation occurring on school grounds; and

(C) One (1) button that, when activated, alerts the school's or school system's administration of an active threat or active shooter situation occurring on school grounds requiring the immediate assistance of the school principal, school resource officer, and any other school security or safety officer present on school grounds and that immediately alerts emergency medical services personnel and each local law enforcement department and local fire department with jurisdiction of an active threat or active shooter situation occurring on school grounds.

(c)

(1) The department shall develop and maintain a list of vendors that provide emergency devices that meet the minimum requirements of this section. LEAs, public charter schools, private schools, and church-related schools must contract with a vendor approved by the department.

(2)

(A) The department shall not approve a vendor for purposes of this section if the vendor manufactures all or part of an emergency device that meets the requirements of this section in a country other than the United States.

(B) Notwithstanding subdivision (c)(2)(A), the attorney general and reporter may approve, upon the department's request, a vendor that manufactures all or part of an emergency device in a country other than the United States for inclusion on the department's approved list of vendors if:

(i) The emergency device provided by the vendor meets the requirements of this section; and

(ii) The attorney general and reporter determines that allowing the vendor to contract with an LEA, public charter school, private school, or church-related school for the vendor to provide emergency devices for purposes of this section poses no safety risk or security threat to this state, a political subdivision of this state, or the contracting LEA or school.

(d) The department shall annually study and collect data regarding:

(1) The number and amount of grants awarded pursuant to this section;

(2) The number and types of emergencies reported by teachers and substitute teachers through a wearable emergency device that meets the requirements of this section, disaggregated by school and type of emergency;

(3) Whether emergency reporting through emergency devices worn by teachers and substitute teachers improved the response time for school administration, law enforcement, or emergency medical services and whether the improved response time, if any, affected the outcome of the emergency situation;

(4) Whether the presence of an emergency device worn by teachers and substitute teachers in the classroom affected the number of classroom or student disciplinary issues reported by teachers; and

(5) Feedback from teachers and substitute teachers who were required to wear an emergency device while performing the duties of their position.

(e) The department shall report the results of the study and data collected pursuant to subsection (d) to the education committees of the senate and house of representatives no later than July 1, 2025, and by each July 1 thereafter. The department shall include in the report any legislative recommendations regarding wearable emergency devices for teachers and substitute teachers.

(f) Any disclosure made pursuant to this section must comply with the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g); § 10-7-504; the Data Accessibility, Transparency, and Accountability Act, compiled in chapter 1, part 7 of this title; and all other relevant privacy laws.

(g) This section is repealed on July 1, 2027.

SECTION 2. This act takes effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.