
The Constitution of the State of Georgia, Art. VIII, § V, Para. II provides for each school district to be under the management and control of a Board of Education. The School Board is empowered to appoint a school superintendent who will serve as the executive officer of the Board of Education and have such powers and duties as provided by general law and contract.

I. AUTHORITY TO ENSURE SCHOOL SAFETY

Pursuant to State Law, the Superintendent and School Board will make rules to govern the School District. As such, the Superintendent is authorized by the School Board to determine the need for early dismissal, delay the opening of, or close a school or schools if emergency conditions exist that threaten the health and/or safety of students or personnel.

In the event the President of the United States proclaims a national emergency or when the Governor proclaims a state of emergency or when, because of an emergency, disaster, act of God, civil disturbance, or shortage of vital and critical material, supplies or fuel, the continued operation of the schools is impractical or impossible, the School Board will have the authority to depart from strict interpretation of the definitions of school year, school month or school day as authorized by the State Board of Education.

Pursuant to State law, the School Board is empowered to establish a police department and hire police officers certified by the Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council. Officers will have the same law enforcement powers on school property, including power of arrest, as law enforcement officers of Cherokee County or surrounding municipalities.

II. SCHOOL SAFETY PLANS

Pursuant to O.C.G.A. §20-2-1185, the Superintendent will cause to be developed a written School Safety Plans that reflects the unique character and needs of schools. The Plan will establish protocols that meet or exceed the minimum standards for the preparation, response to and recovery from natural disasters, hazardous materials or radiological accidents, acts of violence, acts of terrorism and mitigation for future events. Additionally, each School Safety Plans will address security issues in school safety zones as defined in O.C.G.A. §16-11-127.1(a)(3) and security issues involving the transportation of students to and from school and school functions held during non-instructional hours when such transportation is furnished by the school or school district.

Each School Safety Plans will be prepared with input from students, parents or legal guardians, teachers, community leaders, other school and school district employees, local law enforcement, fire service, and public safety and emergency management agencies with the focus of supporting and sustaining the School District's Major System Priority of providing a safe and secure environment for teaching and learning. Each plan will be reviewed and updated as required.

As part of School Safety Plans, a school-based Crisis Response Team will be established and each principal, or designee will serve as the Officer-in-Charge (OIC). Members of the Crisis

Response Team will have assigned responsibilities to ensure a reasonable and effective response to any emergency or critical incident.

School Safety Plans will be distributed and discussed with school-based staff at the beginning of each school year during pre-planning to ensure they understand the protocols established and their responsibilities during drills, exercises, actual emergencies or critical incidents. Some portions of School Safety Plans may be discussed (as appropriate) with students to ensure their understanding and cooperation during drills, exercises, actual emergencies or critical incidents.

III. DISTRICT EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM (DERT)

The Superintendent will provide for the establishment of a District Emergency Response Team to support school-based staff, students and parents during a major emergency or critical incident.

IV. SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS

The Superintendent will provide a means for effective communication with parents, public safety entities and other community stakeholders when conditions exist that threaten the health and/or safety of students or personnel.

V. SAFETY TRAINING

In accordance with Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5, an order by the President of the United States mandating the development of the National Incident Management Systems (NIMS), the Superintendent will require all principals, assistant principals and other district staff (as needed) complete selected courses to ensure the utilization of the National Incident Management Systems (NIMS) and Incident Command Systems (ICS) during emergencies or critical incidents.

VI. EMERGENCY DRILLS/EXERCISES

A. Fire Drills

Pursuant to State law, two fire drills will be conducted by schools during the first 30 days of school opening, with the first drill due within the first 10 days of the start of school. After those two drills, subsequent drills are conducted monthly and all drills are to be reported to the State.

Drills will be held at unexpected intervals during the year to ensure that students and staff will be trained to act properly in a fire emergency. Fire extinguishers will be checked regularly by designated staff and may be checked by fire department officials.

B. Severe Weather/Tornado Drills

Severe weather/Tornado drills shall be held at regular intervals throughout the school year. During the months of November and February, the Georgia State Fire Marshal's Office requires a severe weather drill be conducted and reported online at the website shown above; these drills may be substituted for the monthly fire drill.

C. Code Red Drills

To ensure an appropriate and prompt response by staff to secure a school or other District facility thereby ensuring the safety of students, staff and others during an emergency or critical incident that may result in property damage, serious bodily harm or death, Code Red drills will be held once per semester while school is in session. Drill reports must be maintained on file in the principal's office.

The Superintendent of Schools may authorize exercises to be conducted by district personnel to evaluate the protocols within the School Safety Plan. These exercises may also include representatives from local, state and federal agencies.

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