
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Senator Henry Stern

Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No: SB 1181 **Hearing Date:** 4/14/2026
Author: Hurtado
Version: 3/25/2026 Amended
Urgency: No **Fiscal:** Yes
Consultant: Cassie Royce

SUBJECT: Central Valley School Safety Coordination Pilot Program

SUMMARY: Requires the California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES), in consultation with the State Department of Education (SDE), to establish the Central Valley School Safety Coordination Pilot Program between local educational agencies (LEAs) and regional fusion centers regarding credible school safety threats, as specified.

ANALYSIS:

Existing federal law:

- 1) Establishes the Homeland Security Act of 2002, which grants the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) responsibility for integrating law enforcement and intelligence information relating to terrorist threats to the homeland.
- 2) Establishes, in the Intelligence Reform and Terrorist Prevention Act of 2004, the National Counterterrorism Center as the coordinator at the federal level for terrorism information and assessment.

Existing state law:

- 1) Designates Cal OES as the lead agency 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.
- 2) Provides that Cal OES and the Director of Cal OES shall succeed to, and are vested, with all the duties, powers, purposes, responsibilities, and jurisdiction vested in the Office of Homeland Security and the Director of Homeland

Security, respectively.

- 3) Specifies that Cal OES shall be considered a law enforcement organization as required for receipt of criminal intelligence information.
- 4) Requires Cal OES to establish and lead the California Cybersecurity Integration Center (CCIC) and specifies that the CCIC's primary mission is to reduce the likelihood and severity of cyber incidents that could damage California's economy, its critical infrastructure, or public and private sector computer networks in the state.
- 5) Provides that the CCIC shall serve as the central organizing hub of state government's cybersecurity activities and coordinate information sharing with local, state, and federal agencies, tribal governments, utilities and other service providers, academic institutions, including school districts, county offices of education, and charter schools, and nongovernmental organizations.
- 6) Requires CCIC to operate in close coordination with the California State Threat Assessment System (STAC), which functions as a statewide fusion center, and DHS.

This bill:

- 1) Makes various findings and declarations for purposes of this bill, including the following:
 - a) Schools across California are increasingly confronted with emerging safety threats, including threats that originate or spread through online platforms and may cross jurisdictional boundaries.
 - b) Local educational agencies are often the first institutions to observe warning signs related to potential threats affecting students and school communities.
 - c) The STAC, along with regional fusion centers, plays a critical role in identifying threat patterns and coordinating information sharing across federal, state, and local agencies.
 - d) Improved coordination between local educational agencies and regional threat assessment entities may enhance prevention efforts and allow for earlier identification of credible threats while maintaining strong protections for student privacy and civil liberties.
 - e) The Central Valley faces unique challenges related to youth safety, chronic absenteeism, and emerging digital threats that warrant targeted study and coordination strategies.

- 2) Directs Cal OES, in consultation with the SDE, to establish the Central Valley School Safety Coordination Pilot Program for the purpose of studying and evaluating improved communication pathways between LEAs and regional fusion centers regarding credible safety threats affecting school communities.
- 3) Requires the pilot program to be implemented in selected counties within the Central Valley, including, but not limited to, the Counties of Fresno, Kern, Kings, Tulare, Madera, Merced, San Joaquin, and Stanislaus, as specified.
- 4) Authorizes the pilot program to include, but not be limited to, all of the following:
 - a) Designation of school safety liaisons within participating county offices of education as specified.
 - b) Development of voluntary coordination protocols between participating LEAs and regional fusion centers regarding credible school safety threats while leveraging Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST)-certified programs as specified.
 - c) Training opportunities for school personnel related to threat awareness, responsible reporting practices, and emerging digital safety trends aligned with POST standards and existing school resource officer frameworks as specified.
 - d) Development of information sharing practices between participating educational entities and regional threat assessment centers as specified.
 - e) Identification and analysis of emerging threat trends affecting school communities in coordination with existing school resource officer frameworks and fusion center protocols as specified.
- 5) Requires the pilot program to comply with all applicable state and federal privacy laws and prohibits the pilot program from authorizing bulk monitoring of students or the collection of student information unrelated to a credible safety threat.
- 6) Provides that any information-sharing conducted pursuant to this bill shall be limited to information permitted to be disclosed under existing law.
- 7) Directs Cal OES, in consultation with the SDE, to submit a report with specified information to the Legislature evaluating the pilot program by January 1, 2029.

Background

Author's statement. According to the author, "California's schools are increasingly confronted with safety threats that are more complex, interconnected, and often originate outside of school campuses. From online threats that escalate quickly to real-world emergencies, our educators are being asked to act as first responders, but they are not always equipped with the communication systems and partnerships needed to respond effectively. This challenge is especially pronounced in the Central Valley, where rural school districts face persistent gaps in infrastructure, staffing, and access to coordinated emergency response systems...SB 1181 builds upon existing state-operated Fusion Centers to establish the Central Valley School Safety Coordination Pilot Program to help bridge this gap. By strengthening collaboration between local educational agencies, regional intelligence-sharing partners, and the Governor's Office of Emergency Services, this bill ensures that schools are not operating in isolation when responding to credible threats."

Fusion centers. According to DHS, fusion centers are state-owned and locally operated entities that serve as focal points in states and major urban areas for the receipt, analysis, gathering and sharing of threat-related information between state, local, tribal, other federal, and private sector partners as it relates to law enforcement, homeland security, public safety, and terrorism. DHS states that each fusion center is a vital resource for integrating information from national and local sources to prevent and respond to all threats and hazards and National Network of Fusion Centers brings critical context and value to homeland security and law enforcement by providing partners with a unique perspective on threats to their state or locality and being the primary contact between frontline personnel, state and local leadership and DHS.

Cal OES' role in fusion centers. The STAC was established in the wake of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attack, and now serves as the state's primary fusion center that is statewide in scope. According to Cal OES, the STAC is the state's information sharing clearinghouse of strategic threat analysis and situational awareness reporting to statewide leadership and the public safety community in support of efforts to prevent, prepare for, mitigate and respond to all crimes and all hazards impacting California citizens and critical infrastructure, while preserving civil liberties, individual privacy, and constitutional rights.

The STAC is operated by Cal OES, the California Highway Patrol, and the California Department of Justice which, like Cal OES, have statewide jurisdiction. The STAC serves as a partner to five other regional fusion centers throughout California that are in the major urban areas of Sacramento, Los Angeles, Orange County, San Francisco, and San Diego. Collectively, the STAC and the other five fusion centers in California are known as the State Threat Assessment System

(STAS). According to its website, the STAS is designed to detect, deter, and prevent homeland security threats to citizens and critical infrastructure in California. To accomplish this goal, STAS uses public safety and private sector partnerships in information sharing, analysis, and investigative support.

Cal OES indicates there are 18 positions dedicated to the STAC. These personnel work to facilitate effective coordination and information sharing across partner agencies. For example, Cal OES states that it may have an operational support role for planned events such as the Superbowl by positioning staff at local Emergency Operations Centers or providing mutual aid through the Fire and Rescue system. Cal OES notes this type of support benefits from and is informed by threat and security information managed by the STAC. Cal OES adds that it also has a role in managing federal grants from the Homeland Security Grant Program and the Urban Area Security Initiative to local agencies and fusion centers in California.

In addition, the Critical Infrastructure Protection (CIP) Unit within Cal OES coordinates with the regional fusion centers to enhance the availability of training related to school security. The program is supported through the U.S. Department of Justice and is designed to provide students and teachers with the tools to recognize, respond quickly to, and prevent acts of violence. The CIP Unit works to educate state, county, and local entities about the STAS, provide guidance for the adoption of security-related measures, inform schools of identified threats trends, and facilitate engagement with the regional fusion centers. This bill seeks to solidify such engagement in the Central Valley, in particular, by establishing a pilot program between relevant LEAs and fusion centers that involves the sharing of credible school safety threat information.

Pending state audit. Fusion centers process information from across many government agencies. For example, the STAS coordinates with the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, the Department of Motor Vehicles, the Department of Public Health, county sheriffs' offices, city police, and fire and emergency management departments. Due partly to the ability of fusion centers to collect and share information about individuals, including with the federal government, concerns have been raised about whether these centers pose a risk to civil liberties.

In response to these concerns, the Joint Legislative Audit Committee approved a state audit request on March 24, 2026, to investigate the operations and status of fusion centers in California. As directed by the audit, the California State Auditor will provide independently developed and verified information relating to compliance with laws, rules, and regulations governing the fusion centers, and access to, and use of, sensitive personally identifiable information by participating agencies. The audit will review the STAC and two other selected fusion centers.

Prior/Related Legislation

SB 1095 (Perez) of this session regulates the information sharing activities of California-based fusion centers and imposes related reporting requirements. (Pending in the Senate Privacy, Digital Technologies, and Consumer Protection Committee)

AB 474 (Rodriguez) of 2023 would have required the STAC and Cal OES to prioritize, to the greatest extent possible, cooperation with state and local efforts to disrupt and dismantle criminal drug trafficking networks that pose a threat to California. (Vetoed)

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: Yes

SUPPORT:

None on file

OPPOSITION:

None on file

DUAL REFERRAL: Senate Emergency Management Committee and Senate Education Committee