
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Sasha Renée Pérez, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

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Subject: Central Valley School Safety Coordination Pilot Program.

SUMMARY

This bill requires California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES), in consultation with the Department of Education (CDE), to establish the Central Valley School Safety Coordination Pilot Program, for the purposes of studying and evaluating improved communication pathways between local educational agencies and regional fusion centers regarding credible safety threats affecting school communities, as specified.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Authorizes the governing board of a school district to establish a school police department under the supervision of a school chief of police, and employ peace officers to ensure the safety of school district personnel and pupils, and the security of the real and personal property of the school district. (Education Code (EC) § 38001)
- 2) Requires a school official who is alerted to or observes any threat or perceived threat to immediately report the threat or perceived threat to law enforcement. Requires the report to include copies of any documentary or other evidence associated with the threat or perceived threat. Requires law enforcement to keep a record of any report received pursuant to this section. (EC § 49393)
- 3) Requires the local law enforcement agency or the schoolsite police, upon notification of a report referenced in #2 above, to immediately conduct an investigation and assessment of any threat or perceived threat, with the support of the respective local educational agency (LEA). (EC § 49394)
- 4) Defines “threat or perceived threat” to mean any writing or action of a pupil that creates a reasonable suspicion that the pupil is preparing to commit a homicidal act related to school or a school activity. This may include possession, use, or depictions of firearms, ammunition, shootings, or targets in association with infliction of physical harm, destruction, or death in a social media post, journal, class note, or other media associated with the pupil. It may also include a warning by a parent, pupil, or other individual. (EC § 49390)
- 5) Defines “reasonable suspicion” to mean articulable facts, together with rational inferences from those facts, warranting an objective suspicion. (EC § 49390)

- 6) Requires each school district or COE to be responsible for the overall development of all CSSPs for its schools operating kindergarten or any of grades 1 through 12. (EC § 32281)
- 7) Requires the schoolsite council or a school safety planning committee to be responsible for developing the CSSP in consultation with representatives from law enforcement agencies, fire departments, and other first responder entities, and requires that the CSSP be shared with law enforcement, the fire department, and other first responder entities. (EC § 32281)
- 8) Requires each school to adopt its school safety plan by March 1 and review and update its plan annually by March 1. Requires each school to annually report, in July, on the status of its school safety plan, including a description of key elements of the plan, in the annual school accountability report card (SARC). (EC § 32286)
- 9) Specifies that the CSSP must include:
 - a) An assessment of the current status of school crime committed on school campuses and at school-related functions;
 - b) Identification of appropriate strategies and programs to provide or maintain a high level of school safety;
 - c) Child abuse reporting procedures;
 - d) Disaster procedures, including adaptations for pupils with disabilities;
 - e) An earthquake emergency procedure system;
 - f) Accommodations related to relevant federal disability laws; a requirement that the annual evaluation of plans ensure appropriate adaptations; and allow parents and others to bring a concern about a student's safety to the principal;
 - g) Policies regarding pupils who commit specified acts that would lead to suspension or expulsion;
 - h) Procedures to notify teachers of dangerous pupils;
 - i) A discrimination and harassment policy;
 - j) Any schoolwide dress code;
 - k) Procedures for safe ingress and egress of pupils, parents, and school employees to and from school;
 - l) A safe and orderly environment conducive to learning;

- m) Rules and procedures on school discipline;
- n) Procedures for conducting tactical responses to criminal incidents, including procedures related to individuals with guns on school campuses and at school-related functions;
- o) Procedures to assess and respond to reports of any dangerous, violent, or unlawful activity that is being conducted or threatened to be conducted at the school, at an activity sponsored by the school, or on a school bus serving the school;
- p) Accommodations for students with special needs in case of emergency;
- q) Procedures related to severe fires, including a communication, refuge, and evacuation plan;
- r) Procedures to respond to incidents involving an individual experiencing a sudden cardiac arrest or a similar life-threatening medical emergency while on school grounds;
- s) A protocol for responding to a student suffering from an opioid overdose;
- t) An instructional continuity plan to establish communication with pupils and their families and provide instruction to pupils when in-person instruction is disrupted due to an emergency, including procedures for pupil engagement and a plan to provide access to in-person instruction or remote instruction, as soon as practicable; and
- u) Commencing with the 2026–27 fiscal year, a procedure to identify appropriate refuge shelter for all pupils and staff to be used in the event of an evacuation order in the event of a fire. Also requires each public school serving more than 50 pupils that is in a high or very high fire hazard severity zone to coordinate the procedure with the operational area having jurisdiction within the school's boundaries. (EC § 32282)

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Requires the Cal OES, in consultation with the CDE to establish the Central Valley School Safety Coordination Pilot Program (pilot program), with the stated purpose of studying and evaluating improved communication pathways between LEAs and regional fusion centers regarding credible safety threats affecting school communities, with a focus on addressing chronic absenteeism, youth mental health, and emerging digital or hybrid threats in Senate District 16 and similar regions.
- 2) Requires that the pilot program 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, prioritizing areas with high chronic absenteeism and mental health challenges as identified in district-specific data.

- 3) Authorizes the pilot program to include, but not be limited to, the following:
 - a) Designation of school safety liaisons within participating county offices of education, in coordination with existing school resource officers where applicable.
 - b) Development of voluntary coordination protocols between participating local educational agencies and regional fusion centers regarding credible school safety threats, including online radicalization and cyber threats, while leveraging Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST)-certified programs for school resource officers and school personnel.
 - c) Training opportunities for school personnel related to threat awareness, responsible reporting practices, and emerging digital safety trends affecting youth, including AI-driven disinformation and its links to mental health issues, aligned with POST standards and existing school resource officer frameworks.
 - d) Development of information sharing practices between participating educational entities and regional threat assessment centers, emphasizing support for chronic absenteeism reduction through mental health resources.
 - e) Identification and analysis of emerging threat trends affecting school communities, including digital and hybrid threats, such as disinformation campaigns targeting youth mental health, family stability, or resource-related tensions in rural areas, in coordination with school resource officer and fusion center protocols.
- 4) Prohibits the pilot program from authorizing bulk monitoring of students or the collection of student information unrelated to a credible safety threat.
- 5) Limits the information sharing conducted pursuant to this bill to information permitted to be disclosed under existing law.
- 6) Requires Cal OES, by January 1, 2029, in consultation with the CDE, to submit a report to the Legislature evaluating the pilot program. The report shall include, but not be limited to, the following:
 - a) The number of *participating local educational agencies*.
 - b) A description of communication practices developed through the pilot.
 - c) Emerging threat trends affecting schools identified through the pilot program, with specific data on Senate District 16 challenges, including

- chronic absenteeism reductions via threat mitigation, youth mental health improvements, and impacts from digital or hybrid threats.
- d) Privacy and civil liberties safeguards implemented.
 - e) Recommendations regarding whether the pilot program should be expanded statewide.
 - f) Recommendations for pursuing federal grants, including those from the Homeland Security Grant Program or Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention grants, to support program expansion and address identified threats.
- 7) Defines “local educational agencies” as a school district, a county office of education, a nonprofit charter school participating as a member of a special education local plan area, or a special education local plan area.
- 8) Makes a series of findings and declarations related to the Central Valley’s unique challenges with youth safety, mental health, chronic absenteeism, and digital threats, and the need for improved coordination and privacy-protected information sharing to address those challenges.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** 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. At the same time, schools are uniquely positioned to identify early warning signs. This may be in the form of chronic absenteeism, behavioral health concerns, or digital indicators of potential harm. Without a clear and coordinated framework to share information responsibly, these warning signs can be missed.

“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.”

- 2) ***What is a fusion center?*** The Senate Emergency Management Committee’s analysis of this bill notes the following:

“According to the Department of Homeland Security (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.”

The State Threat Assessment System (STAS) is California’s network of fusion centers. According to its website:

“At the state level, CalOES, in partnership with the California Highway Patrol (CHP) provide[s] daily strategic analysis and tactical support, while state agency partners such as California’s Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), Department of Justice (CalDOJ), and Department of Public Health (CDPH) also contribute personnel or resources to advance the anti-terrorism objectives of the STAS. At the local level, County Sheriff’s Offices as well as City Police, Fire and Emergency Management Departments contribute personnel and resources to the STAS.”

The network of the STAS consists of the State Threat Assessment Center (STAC); four regional threat assessment centers (RTACs)—the Central California Intelligence Center; the Joint Regional Intelligence Center, serving the counties of Los Angeles, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura; the Northern California Regional Intelligence Center; the Orange County Intelligence Assessment Center; and the San Diego Law Enforcement Coordination Center, an RTAC subordinate major urban area fusion center. Cal OES indicates that the STAC serves as “California’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.”

- 3) ***Currently known interactions between fusion centers and California schools.*** According to the Senate Emergency Management Committee, the Critical Infrastructure Protection (CIP) Unit within Cal OES coordinates with the regional fusion centers to enhance the availability of POST certified 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. Examples of these trainings course titles include School Threat - Active Assailant investigations, Basic Vulnerability Assessments for School Facilities, and Advanced Threat Assessment: K-12 School Safety.

Regional fusion centers also maintain Suspicious Activity Report (SAR) systems on their respective websites, with some additionally providing specific reporting systems for school related threats.

This bill would require Cal OES to study and evaluate improved communication pathways between local educational agencies and regional fusion centers regarding credible safety threats affecting school communities, with a focus on addressing chronic absenteeism, youth mental health, and emerging digital or hybrid threats in Senate District 16 and similar regions. The bill provides significant discretion to Cal OES, in consultation with the CDE, to determine the pilot program elements, listing examples elements such as the following:

- a) Training opportunities for school personnel related to threat awareness, responsible reporting practices, and emerging digital safety trends affecting youth, including AI-driven disinformation and its links to mental health issues, aligned with POST standards and existing school resource officer frameworks.
- b) Development of information sharing practices between participating LEAs and regional threat assessment centers, emphasizing support for chronic absenteeism reduction through mental health resources.
- c) Identification and analysis of emerging threat trends affecting school communities, including digital and hybrid threats, such as disinformation campaigns targeting youth mental health, family stability, or resource-related tensions in rural areas, in coordination with school resource officer and fusion center protocols.

Importantly, the bill language indicates that the pilot program *may* include these elements, but does not limit the scope of the pilot program to what is listed. Thus, it is plausible that the pilot program may ultimately take the form of an approach entirely outside of the example set provided. Further, the bill, as currently in print, does not specify a sunset date by which the pilot program will come to an end. Each of the potential outcomes of the examples provided in the bill have varying levels of privacy and security implications.

In their letter submitted to this committee in opposition to this bill, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) California Action argues the following:

“Explicitly increasing coordination between schools and fusion centers will lead to sensitive student information entering systems frequently used by federal law enforcement and immigration authorities. While SB 1181 contains certain limits on information sharing, the black-box nature of fusion centers makes it difficult to know which laws they comply with and which laws the constantly violate. The students most likely to be harmed

by this approach are the very students the bill seeks to support: students of color, immigrant students, and LGBTQ students. Embedding school safety within fusion centers is likely to exacerbate distrust and disengagement rather than improve attendance or wellbeing of students.

Should this bill move forward, the author may wish to consider ways to more specifically tailor the scope of the pilot program to ensure that the practices resulting from the program can be meaningfully evaluated.

- 4) ***Existing school-based initiatives to support campus climate and student mental health.*** California has made significant efforts to develop the best practices and strategies for addressing student mental health, behavior, and school climate. These include:
- a) Restorative justice practices contribute to the development of a positive school climate and discipline policies that are humanistic and inclusive, while increasing student voice and engagement.
 - b) Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) encourages local educational agencies (LEAs) to establish and align school-wide, data-driven systems of academic and behavioral supports to more effectively meet the needs of California's diverse learners in the most inclusive environment.
 - c) Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS) is a school-wide approach to discipline that is intended to create safe, predictable, and positive school environments.

The state has also made coordinated investments through the Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative (CYBHI), which seeks to overhaul California's mental health system and enhance the pathways connecting families with the needed services. Specific school-based workstreams include the following:

- a) *Safe Spaces Trauma Informed Training* – A free, online training designed to help individuals working with children and youth recognize and respond to signs of trauma and stress.
- b) *CalHOPE Mindfulness, Resilience, and Well-being Supports* – Providing no-cost mental health and wellness resources to schools across the state. The website contains resources that focus on creating trusted spaces, building resilience, and recognizing the signs of mental stress and duress in colleagues, students, and family members.
- c) *Student Behavioral Health Incentive Program* – Addressing behavioral health access barriers for Medi-Cal students through targeted interventions that increase access to preventive, early intervention, or other behavioral health services provided by school-affiliated behavioral health providers for TK-12 children in public schools.
- d) *School-Linked Partnership and Capacity Grants* - Providing COEs and LEAs, as well as institutions of higher education (IHEs), with critical

resources to build infrastructure and partnerships and achieve a long-term and sustainable funding model for student behavioral health services. These one-time grants aim to increase operational readiness to engage in the CYBHI Fee Schedule program through supporting Medi-Cal enrollment, building service delivery and billing infrastructure, establishing data collection and documentation processes, and supporting collective impact efforts.

- e) *CYBHI Fee Schedule Program* - Increases access to school-linked behavioral health services. The program establishes a sustainable reimbursement source from Managed Care Plans, commercial health insurance, and disability insurers. Covered services include outpatient mental health or substance use disorder services for students under 26 years of age. The Fee Schedule creates a more approachable billing model for LEAs and public IHEs, easing burdens related to contracting, rate negotiation, and navigation across delivery systems, and reducing uncertainty around students' health insurance coverage.
 - f) *Transforming Together* - Supported by the San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools, Transforming Together (T2) brings together a cross-sector Collaborative Leadership Working Group to align and integrate systems efforts for a re-imagined, youth-centered behavioral health ecosystem. Work is conducted in close partnership with CDE's California Community Schools Partnership Program and piloted in four demonstration counties.
- 5) ***Forthcoming audit.*** In March of this year, the Joint Legislative Audit Committee (JLAC) approved an audit of the STAC and two selected local fusion centers focusing on compliance with laws, rules, and regulations governing the fusion centers and access to and use of sensitive personally identifiable information by participating agencies. The listed objectives of the audit include the following:
- a) Identifying policies related to who determines which agencies (local, state, or federal) are allowed to participate in fusion center activities.
 - b) Identifying the policies for how other states and local law enforcement agencies obtain intelligence, data, or assistance from the fusion center.
 - c) Identifying local, state, and federal entities that have staff assigned to the STAC and local fusion centers, including national guard members, and the processes for determining which entities and staff are assigned, under what authority and supervision, and who is responsible for ensuring their compliance with restrictions on accessing law enforcement information.
 - d) Determining whether the law authorizes STAC's and local fusion centers' information collection and sharing practices and whether such collection and sharing practices comply with applicable requirements. To the extent possible, evaluate data sharing practices specifically related to state and local agencies sharing information with the federal government, including

for purposes of immigration enforcement, and whether those practices comply with all applicable laws, regulations, and policies.

- e) To the extent possible, determining whether STAC and the local fusion centers have defined missions and have established metrics that they use to assess their performance. If so, assess the validity of these metrics. Review the performance of the STAC and local fusion centers against these or other applicable measures of performance to determine whether they are effective in their mission and purpose. Identifying performance trends based on any internal evaluation reports over the past 10 years.

In the petition letter submitted to JLAC requesting the audit, the requestor, Senator Sabrina Cervantes, noted the following:

“No single piece of federal or state legislation established this national network of fusion centers, defined its mission, or authorized it to operate as a decentralized domestic intelligence collection mechanism feeding the federal intelligence community with information gathered from every part of American life. The network operates in secret and under ambiguous lines of authority. It includes not only federal, state, and local law enforcement, but also other public and private entities that have no legal or statutory authority to collect or disseminate intelligence about Americans. The public has little access to information regarding what their local fusion centers do in their communities or even the individuals who work there. Fusion centers were originally created with the laudable goal of preventing terrorism. However, over the nearly three decades since their establishment and with limited formal oversight, these centers have seen a significant expansion in their surveillance and targeting activities to include broad domestic activities. The infrastructure established at fusion centers is designed to gather considerable information about individuals’ identities, movements, activities, and relationships from various aspects of their lives, and to collect and collate this data to multiple levels of government and private entities for analysis and decision-making.”

An expected completion date for the audit has not yet been released.

- 6) **Pilot program reporting.** This bill would require Cal OES, in consultation with CDE, to submit a report to the Legislature that evaluates the pilot program. The report shall include, but not be limited to, the following information:
 - a) The number of participating LEAs.
 - b) A description of communication practices developed through the pilot.
 - c) Emerging threat trends affecting schools identified through the pilot program, with specific data on Senate District 16 challenges, including chronic absenteeism reductions via threat mitigation, youth mental health improvements, and impacts from digital or hybrid threats.
 - d) Privacy and civil liberties safeguards implemented.

- e) Recommendations regarding whether the pilot program should be expanded statewide.
- f) Recommendations for pursuing federal grants, including those from the Homeland Security Grant Program or Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention grants, to support program expansion and address identified threats.

As noted in Comment 3, regional fusion centers already have some level of existing interaction with LEAs. However, information on the scope of interactions beyond those noted publicly is limited— at very least until the forthcoming audit (see Comment 5) is completed. This bill encourages further partnership between regional fusion centers and LEAs who serve students in some of California's most vulnerable communities.

In the effort to balance the interest in coordinated partnerships to protect schools from safety threats, with the need for increased scrutiny when involving student privacy and civil liberties, the committee recommends the following amendments:

- a) *Require the evaluation report to additionally include the following:*
 - i) *Information on the supportive resources provided to participating schools or students in response to emerging threat trends. These may include, but are not limited to, resources for mental health, restorative justice, and hate and bullying prevention*
 - ii) *Information on how the regional fusion centers identify threats and determine what constitutes a credible safety threat in the school environment.*
 - iii) *A description of the types of information shared between participating LEAs, regional fusion centers, and Cal OES when a credible safety threat has been identified.*
 - iv) *A description of specific privacy and civil liberties safeguards implemented by Cal OES, regional fusion centers, and participating LEAs.*
- b) *Specify a sunset date for the pilot program consistent with the required evaluation report.*
- c) *Amend the definition of local educational agencies to maintain continuity with existing definitions.*
- d) *Ensure continuity in the use of the term, "regional fusion centers" by replacing a reference to a "regional threat assessment center."*

7) ***Prior and related legislation.***

SB 1095 (Perez, 2026) regulates the information sharing activities of California-based fusion centers and imposes related reporting requirements. *SB 1095 is pending a hearing in the Senate Public Safety Committee.*

AB 474 (Rodriguez, 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. *AB 474 was vetoed by the Governor.*

SUPPORT

None received

OPPOSITION

ACLU California Action
All of US or None
Legal Services for Prisoners with Children
Oakland Privacy

-- END --