

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT

06/17/2025-HELD IN COMMITTEE

BILL NO. 36-0049

Thirty-Sixth Legislature of the Virgin Islands

March 28, 2025

An Act establishing the Bureau of School Security within the Virgin Islands Department of Education

PROPOSED BY: Senator Novelle E. Francis, Jr., and Clifford A. Joseph, Sr.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the Virgin Islands:

SECTION 1. Title 17 Virgin Islands Code, is amended by adding the following chapter 46:

“Chapter 46. Bureau of School Security

§ 1101. Short title

This chapter may be cited as The Bureau of School Security Act

§ 1102. Organization and Leadership of Bureau of School Security

There is established within the Department, a Bureau of School Security, in each school district. The Bureau shall be headed by a Chief of School Security and Deputy Chief of School Security that must not serve in the same school district.

(a) The Chief of School Security shall be appointed by and supervised by the Commissioner. The Chief of School Security shall appoint the Deputy Chief of School Security.

(b) The Chief of School Security and Deputy Chief of School Security must each have at least five years of experience as members of a state or territorial police department.

(c) The Chief of School Security shall direct and manage the Bureau of School Security by coordinating the daily operations of Bureau personnel with other Department personnel in order to provide a safe environment for students, staff and visitors on each public-school campus in the territory. The Chief of School Security shall enforce territorial and federal laws as well as policies, directives, and standards of the Department. The Deputy Chief will provide primary and expert support to the Chief of School Security.

§ 1103. School Resource Officers

(a) “School Resource Officer” means a peace officer, certified under title 5 Virgin Islands Code, section 561(a), who is designated to be responsible for school safety, crime prevention and the appropriate response to crime in public schools and has completed the training specified in section 1016 of this chapter.

(b) School Resource Officers shall be employees of the Department assigned to the Bureau of School Security.

(c) School Resource Officers shall be supervised by the Chief of School Security and Deputy Chief of School Security.

(d) A School Resource Officer shall be required to have at least three (3) years of experience as a law enforcement officer, in addition to the training requirements outlined in section 1016 of this chapter.

§ 1104. School Monitors

(a) “School Monitor” means an employee of the Bureau who works to maintain the safe and orderly conduct of activities and programs within school grounds.

(b) School Monitors shall be employees of the Department and assigned to the Bureau of School Security.

(c) School Monitors shall be supervised by the school's Principal to which they are assigned and shall be supervised through periodic inspections, review and analysis of reports submitted.

(d) The School Monitor's mission is to encourage students to follow school policy and local and federal laws while on school grounds, to reduce incidents of disorderly behavior on school grounds, and to discourage the disruption of school business, programs, and other activities by students and/or non-students.

(e) Before employment, a School Monitor shall pass a psychological screening test as required by title 17 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 11, section 131(b).

§ 1105. School Investigators and Truancy Officers

(a) "School Investigator" means an employee of the Bureau who works to collect evidence, search, interview, interrogate and apply various investigative methods to determine the facts regarding a crime on school campus.

(b) "Truancy Officer" means an employee of the Bureau who works to ensure compliance with the Virgin Islands Board of Education attendance policies and is responsible for enforcing the rules and policies of the Department for proper school attendance.

(c) In consultation with the Commissioner and the Department of Justice, the Chief of School Security shall adopt policies and procedures that outline the specific responsibilities, roles and limitations of School Investigators and Truancy Officers.

§ 1106. Staffing requirements and assignment

(a) The Bureau shall have the following staff: at least one SRO per school at the elementary level and junior high school level (grades pre-K – 8), and at least two SROs per school at the high school level (grades 9-12); two (2) school investigators (one per district), and six (6) Truancy Officers (three per district).

(b) The Commissioner, in consultation with the Chief of School Security and school Principals, shall determine the number of School Monitors assigned to each public school in the Territory.

§ 1107. Training requirements

(a) Within six months of employment, the Chief of School Security and Deputy Chief of School Security shall successfully complete the following courses or equivalent courses of instructions approved by the Commissioner:

(1) the Basic School Resource Officer Course of Instruction offered by the National Association of School Resource Officers;

(2) the Advanced School Resource Officer Course of Instruction offered by the National Association of School Resource Officers;

(3) the School Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Course offered by the National Association of School Resource Officers or an equivalent course of instruction; and

(4) the SRO Supervisors and Management Course offered by the National Association of School Resource Officers.

(b) Within six months of employment, a School Resource Officer shall successfully complete the following courses or equivalent courses of instructions approved by the Commissioner:

(1) the Basic School Resource Officer Course of Instruction offered by the National Association of School Resource Officers;

(2) the Adolescent Mental Health Training for School Resource Officers and Educators (AAHT) offered by the National Association of School Resource Officers; and

(3) Upon the discretion of the Chief of School Security, successfully complete additional courses of instruction, designated and approved by the Commissioner of Education, in the following areas:

(A) Child and adolescent development and psychology;

(B) De-escalation techniques and techniques for limiting the use of force;

(C) Mental health crisis intervention and suicide prevention; and

(D) Students with disabilities or special needs.

(c) Prior to employment, a newly hired School Monitor shall:

(1) Successfully complete the School Security Officer Course offered by the National Association of School Resource Officers or an equivalent course of instruction approved by the Commissioner of Education;

(2) Upon the discretion of the Chief of School Security, successfully complete additional courses of instruction, designated and approved by the Commissioner of Education, in the following areas:

(A) Child and adolescent development and psychology;

(B) De-escalation techniques and techniques for limiting the use of force;

(C) Mental health crisis intervention and suicide prevention; and

(D) Students with disabilities or special needs.

(3) Each currently employed School Monitor shall successfully complete the School Security Officer Course offered by the National Association of School Resource Officers (or an equivalent course of instruction approved by the Commissioner) and any required additional courses of instruction within twelve months following enactment of this chapter.

(d) The Chief of School Security shall designate continuing education and training requirements that require School Resource Officers and School Monitors to successfully

complete at least one annual refresher course per calendar year (not including the first calendar year during which the School Resource Officer or School Monitor took their initial training courses). The Chief of School Security shall oversee the design and implementation of such refresher courses within the Bureau. A School Resource Officer or School Monitor who has not completed the refresher training course during a calendar year as established by this subsection shall not work in a school until the School Resource Officer or Monitor has completed the required refresher training. The refresher course training curriculum developed by the Bureau under this section must incorporate learning objectives including:

- (1) Child and adolescent development and psychology;
- (2) Positive behavioral interventions and supports; conflict resolution techniques;
- (3) De-escalation techniques and techniques for limiting the use of force, including the use of physical, mechanical and chemical restraints;
- (4) The mental and behavioral health needs of children with disabilities or special needs; and
- (5) Mental health crisis intervention.

§ 1108. Bureau policies

(a) The Chief of School Security, must adopt policies and procedures regarding the roles of Bureau security personnel that:

- (1) Include clear descriptions of duties and responsibilities of all personnel under the Bureau of School Security to whom each personnel is answerable under varying scenarios;
- (2) Incorporate policies and strategies of crime prevention through environmental design in order to reduce opportunities for crime to occur, reduce fear, and to improve the overall safety of each school;

(3) Describe policies that will ensure that at least one armed School Resource Officer is on-site at each public school at all times;

(4) Describe the uniforms, badges and law enforcement equipment (if any) that area required to be worn by School Resource Officers and School Monitors;

(5) Prohibit a School Resource Officer from becoming involved in formal school discipline situations that are the responsibility of School Monitors or school administrators;

(6) Recognize that trained safety and security staff know when to informally interact with students to reinforce school rules and when to enforce the law;

(7) Clarify the circumstances under which teachers and school administrators may ask School Resource Officers or School Monitors to intervene with a student;

(8) Explain how safety and security staff will be engaged in creating a positive school climate and positive relationships with students; and

(9) Describe the process for families to file complaints with the school and, when applicable, the local law enforcement agency or the company that provides the safety and security staff on contract related to safety and security staff and a process for investigating and responding to complaints.

(10) Describe a training pathway and timeline for School Monitors interested in becoming School Resource Officers.

(b) At the beginning of each school year, each school Principal must present to and discuss with students, and distribute to students' families, information about the role and responsibilities of the security staff.

§ 1109. Reports and oversight

(a) The Bureau of School Security shall submit to the Commissioner of Education, the Board of Education and the Legislature's Committee on Education and Education and

1 Workforce Development by January 15 of each year, an annual census of School Resource
2 Officers and School Monitors located in each public school. As part of the census, the Bureau
3 shall compile the following information regarding school security personnel:

4 (a) The names of employed School Resource Officers with school assignment
5 designations of each;

6 (b) The names of employed School Monitors with school assignment
7 designations of each; and

8 (c) The status of each SRO or SM regarding pre-requisite training requirements
9 and continuing education refresher course requirements.

10 (b) The Bureau of School Security shall submit to the Commissioner of Education, the
11 Board of Education, and the Legislature's Committee on Education and Workforce
12 Development by January 15 of each year, an Annual Report on School Security that describes:

13 (a) General description of the physical and social-emotional safety environment
14 of public schools throughout the Territory;

15 (b) The status of staffing vacancies and needs within the Bureau;

16 (c) Equipment and non-personnel needs within the Bureau; and

17 (d) A description of challenges and needs for general school security and student
18 social-emotional well-being during the upcoming year.

19 (c) The Commissioner of Education shall require an annual School Security
20 Performance Review Report by January 15 of each year, from each school Principal, that
21 describes the following:

22 (a) General description of the physical, social and emotional safety environment
23 on the school campus during the previous year;

(b) Itemization by date and description of physical altercations or criminal activity involving intervention by SROs or other law enforcement personnel during the previous year;

(c) Itemization by date and description of any reports of misconduct by SROs or School Monitors; and

(d) A description of challenges and needs for campus security and student social-emotional well-being during the upcoming year.

SECTION 2. Title 3 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 15, section 262 is repealed.

SECTION 3. Title 3 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 7, section 96(a) is amended by designating sections 13, 14 and 15 as sections 14, 15 and 16 and inserting the following section 13:

“(13) supervise the Bureau of School Security to ensure the safety and security of students, employees, visitors and all department locations including school campuses.”

SECTION 4. Title 3 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 7 section 94 is amended by adding the following subsection (f):

“(f) There is established within the Department of Education a Bureau of School Security, responsible for the safety and security of each public school in the Territory and the social-emotional well-being of students, as further described in title 17 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 46.”

SECTION 5. Title 5 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 305, subsection 3561(a) is amended by inserting “School Security Officers of the Department of Education, Bureau of School Security,” after “Virgin Islands Housing Authority.”

SECTION 6. Title 3 Virgin Islands Code, chapter 25, section 559 is amended by adding the following subsection (e):

“(e)(1) A school monitor who works in the Bureau of School Security shall receive a hazardous duty pay differential of five percent of his basic compensation in addition to the basic compensation.

(2) A school resource officer who works in the Bureau of School Security shall receive a hazardous duty pay differential of ten percent of his basic compensation in addition to the basic compensation.”

BILL SUMMARY

This bill establishes the Bureau of School Security within the Virgin Islands Department of Education to ensure the safety and security of all department students, employees, visitors and facilities.

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