

**W. Va. 126CSR204, Policy 8300, Safe Schools Funding Process
Comment Log**

Comment Period: April 10, 2024 – May 13, 2024

Action

A/S Comment was accepted and supports the proposed policy.

A/C Comment was accepted and resulted in changes to the proposed policy.

N Comment was not accepted.

Date	Commenter	Comments	Action	Rationale
§126-204-1. General.				
2024-5-12	<p>Jim McJunkin, MD WV Chapter of American Academy of Pediatrics Injury Prevention Committee Chair of Above Organization Charleston WV Community Member</p>	<p>I am a Community member and retired critical care pediatrician who is deeply concerned about increasing efforts to put armed personnel in our schools.</p> <p>I believe the best use of a Safe Schools Fund would be on preventative measures (mentioned in the next three sections), and not on what I would call “reactive measures” such as armed personnel.</p> <p>The fact that the Safe Schools Funding policy currently exists as an unfunded mandate will not only detract from efforts to properly support prevention and early detection of threats, but could inadvertently encourage underfunded, risk-laden approaches involving guns in our schools, including even arming teachers.</p> <p>Therefore the legislature should ensure that the Safe Schools Fund is sufficiently funded in an ongoing way by putting it into the State Budget as a line item.</p>	N	<p>This policy only defines the required funding process should funds be appropriated and not the specifics of the allowable expenditures provided in the state code or the amount of regular funding provided.</p>

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		In this way, resource allocation will be driven less by availability concerns, and more by the highest quality approaches to ensure our children’s’ safety.		
2024-4-29	Sarah Gottlieb Retired School Nurse Charleston WV Parent/Family	Suggest that Safe School Fund should be managed as an ongoing fund so our children’s safety needs can continue to be addressed.	N	This policy only defines the required funding process should funds be appropriated and not the specifics of the allowable expenditures provided in the state code or the amount of regular funding provided.
2024-04-29	Ann Bradley Charleston, WV Community Member	<p>I support the awarding of funds consistent with the provisions of W. Va. Code §18-5-8 and the priorities it sets forth. I assume the funding for special education classroom videos has been completed. The second priority identified in the statute is securing entryways in schools. W.Va. Code §18-5-8(c) expressly states: “After all public school facilities have been provided sufficient funds to meet the special education video camera requirements, the funds shall be distributed . . . to meet the needs of school facilities to have safe school entry ways. After safe school entry way needs have been met the West Virginia Department of Education shall distribute funds based on a determination of need.”</p> <p>Clearly, funding decisions must give the “safe entry ways” option priority to be in compliance with State Code. Furthermore, it is a low cost option and can be effective if used diligently with regular monitoring to keep persons who present a danger to our students and staff out of school buildings during school days. Also, presumably it would be a one-time expense with subsequent costs relating only to maintenance and upkeep. This option is in</p>	A/S	

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		contrast to other measures, such as hiring school resource officers, which must be refunded each year.		
§126-204-2. Definitions.				
2024-5-12	Jim McJunkin, MD WV Chapter of American Academy of Pediatrics Injury Prevention Committee Chair of Above Organization Charleston WV Community Member	Safe School Entryways are not well- defined. I don't claim to be an expert on this but it seems that certain features need inclusion in the definition so that schools will be uniformly and optimally outfitted for best protection of students. I believe Mr. Vittoe would be a resource for updating the definition of school entry ways.	N	This policy only defines the funding process and not the specifics of the allowable expenditures. Safe School Entryways are currently defined by the School Building Authority's §164-1-1 - Policy and Procedures Handbook. Plans submitted by an applicant will be reviewed according to this standard and with input from applicable law enforcement agencies.
2024-04-29	Ann Bradley Charleston, WV Community Member	the definition of "Public School District" is not appropriate as the term is used elsewhere in the proposed rule. A "district" normally refers to a geographic area but in this proposed definition it refers not to a geographic area, but rather to (1) "county boards of education" (i.e., the governing entity for education within a county) and (2) "charter public schools" – and not the supervising board of such charter schools. It is suggested that a different term be used, such as "School Board" and that it be defined as "the appropriate county board of education, public charter school governing board, or administrative council of a multicounty vocational center."	N	The term "Public School District" was selected in coordination with the West Virginia Department of Education – Office of Legal Services to define the diverse organizations it represents and to align with language in other policies.
§126-204-3. Annual Safety and Security Assessments and Reports.				
2024-5-12	Jim McJunkin, MD WV Chapter of American Academy of Pediatrics Injury Prevention Committee Chair of	For the items included, the statewide summary is helpful (for example nearly 300 out of about 700 schools statewide need to have school entry ways addressed) However other important preventative measures	N	This policy only defines the required funding process should funds be appropriated and not the specifics of the allowable expenditures provided in the

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	Above Organization Charleston WV Community Member	should be assessed as well such as needs for school counselors and nurses, etc, and presence of threat assessment teams, and efforts to promote suspicious activity reporting (eg, anonymously), and efforts to promote safe storage of firearms in the home.		state code or the amount of regular funding provided.
2024-4-26	Christine Zinn Retired Nurse Charleston WV Community Member	Threat assessment must be ongoing in addition to the annual review.	N	This policy only defines the funding process and not the specifics of the review. School districts and local law enforcement manage the regularity of threat assessments and those do occur more frequently than annually.
§126-204-4. Safe Schools Fund General Requirements.				
2024-5-12	Jim McJunkin, MD WV Chapter of American Academy of Pediatrics Injury Prevention Committee Chair of Above Organization Charleston WV Community Member	Agree that safe school entryway needs be met (after special education video cameras) before distribution of funds for other priorities. Securing school entryways once accomplished would not involve much in the way of ongoing expenditures each year and yet provides an improved layer of protection to every student within a school. Thus for the money spent this is a cost-effective approach. Other preventative approaches should be considered as priorities for funding as well such as school counselors/nurses, and threat assessment teams. Also efforts to support promotion of suspicious activity reporting and safe storage of firearms in the home would be worthwhile and require little investment. As Mr. Vittoe said in the Charleston Gazette in January 2023: “We spend a tremendous amount of money on physical security items for the schools, but we’re still going to get the most effect out of our	N	This policy only defines the required funding process should funds be appropriated and not the specifics of the allowable expenditures provided in the state code or the amount of regular funding provided.

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		suspicious-activity reporting, our behavior threat assessment, and safety storing our guns at home. Those three things together help us prevent a tragedy.”		
2024-4-29	Sarah Gottlieb Retired School Nurse Charleston WV Parent/Family	When requesting funds, the amount of funds expected to be made available needs to be known.	N	Potential applicants will be informed when funds are available through the application process. This information is also publicly available as part of the approved State Budget.
2024-4-26	Christine Zinn Retired Nurse Charleston WV Community Member	I fully support prioritizing the construction of safe entryways in all schools and think this should be implemented in all schools. This should include weapon-detection systems for schools that don't have them.	N	The listed items and their priority are defined by the applicable state code, but the selection committee may also consider other safety and security needs in the application process.
2024-4-26	Christine Zinn Retired Nurse Charleston WV Community Member	Preventative safety measures should be implemented and prioritized, such as better availability of mental health support in schools with psychologists or counselors. Every school should have a threat assessment team and reports from students about potential threats must be investigated promptly.	N	This policy only defines the funding process and not the specifics of the allowable expenditures provided in the state code or what other needs are present.
2024-05-13	Richard Duncan Superintendent Roane County Schools Reedy WV	4.3 - This funding should not be prioritized for "safe schools entrances" when the School Building Authority already provides funding for this and other facility improvements. Instead, funding should be prioritized for elements that are not otherwise funded, such as security systems, exterior campus improvements (fencing, etc.), cameras in places not designated self-contained special education classrooms, etc.	N	This policy only defines the required funding process should funds be appropriated and not the specifics of the allowable expenditures provided in the state code or the amount of regular funding provided.
§126-204-5. Submission and Evaluation Process for Safe Schools Fund Needs-based Funding.				
2024-5-12	Jim McJunkin, MD WV Chapter of American Academy of Pediatrics	Those applying for funds should be informed as to the amount of funds available. The balance of the fund and sources for the fund and the amount	N	Potential applicants will be informed when funds are available through the application process. This information is

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	Injury Prevention Committee Chair of Above Organization Charleston WV Community Member	available from each source should be available to the general public.		also publicly available as part of the approved State Budget.
2024-04-29	Ann Bradley Charleston, WV Community Member	the proposed rule references the “Safe School Fund” and states that funds will be distributed “subject to availability.” What is the current balance in the Safe School Fund? It seems reasonable that applicants for funds should be given information on the amount of funds available in a given year and this information should also be made available to the general public. If other sources of funds are to be used to provide requested safety and security measures, the sources and amounts should also be publicly disclosed.	N	Potential applicants will be informed when funds are available through the application process. This information is also publicly available as part of the approved State Budget.
2024-05-13	Richard Duncan Superintendent Roane County Schools Reedy WV	5.2.d - Facility improvements that would otherwise be eligible for funding from the School Building Authority should not be considered for funding here or otherwise the funds should be directed to the SBA for distribution.	N	This policy only defines the required funding process should funds be appropriated and not the specifics of the allowable expenditures provided in the state code or the amount of regular funding provided.
§126-204-6. Selection Process for Safe Schools Fund Needs-based Funding.				
2024-5-12	Jim McJunkin, MD WV Chapter of American Academy of Pediatrics Injury Prevention Committee Chair of Above Organization Charleston WV Community Member	The selection committee should include parents and citizens at large. Cost-effectiveness should be considered with high priority given to projects serving a large number of students per dollar (or other standard amount) spent.	N	The committee will be comprised of members best suited to evaluate the applications, and this could include parents and citizens at large. No members are currently identified. The selection committee may consider this data when determining other significantly relevant criteria.

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2024-4-29	Sarah Gottlieb Retired School Nurse Charleston WV Parent/Family	Please have community members/parents on the selection committee in addition to the planned members.	N	The committee will be comprised of members best suited to evaluate the applications, and this could include parents and citizens at large. No members are currently identified.
2024-04-29	Ann Bradley Charleston, WV Community Member	The names of members of the selection committee should be made public and the members should include parents of current students and citizens at large, and not just WVDOE staff, with the understanding that any members of the committee would be prohibited from voting on any request in which they would have a direct interest.	N	The committee will be comprised of members best suited to evaluate the applications, and this could include parents and citizens at large. No members are currently identified.
2024-04-29	Ann Bradley Charleston, WV Community Member	a criterion should be added which requires consideration of previous applications for funds by the requester and, if granted, whether the funds were appropriately spent.	N	The selection committee may consider this data when determining other significantly relevant criteria.
§126-204-7. Award Process and Requirements for Selected Projects.				
2024-05-13	Richard Duncan Superintendent Roane County Schools Reedy WV	7.9 / 7.10 - Facility improvements that would otherwise be eligible for funding from the School Building Authority should not be considered for funding here or otherwise the funds should be directed to the SBA for distribution.	N	This policy only defines the required funding process should funds be appropriated and not the specifics of the allowable expenditures provided in the state code or the amount of regular funding provided.
§126-204-8. Severability.				