118TH CONGRESS  1ST SESSION  

H. R. ______

To amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to establish Regional School Safety Development Centers to provide consultation for schools to develop or improve a school safety plan based on evidence-based best practices, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. RUTHERFORD introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on __________________________

A BILL

To amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to establish Regional School Safety Development Centers to provide consultation for schools to develop or improve a school safety plan based on evidence-based best practices, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Preparing Leaders to Assess Needs for School Safety Act of 2023” or the “PLAN for School Safety Act of 2023”.

SEC. 2. SCHOOL SAFETY DEVELOPMENT CENTER PROGRAM.

(a) In General.—Subtitle A of title XXII of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 651 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“SEC. 2220F. SCHOOL SAFETY DEVELOPMENT CENTER PROGRAM.

“(a) In General.—The Director shall make awards, including grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements, to eligible entities to establish, improve, or maintain State-wide or intrastate regional School Safety Development Centers for the purposes of providing customized consulting services to schools to develop, improve, or implement the school’s individualized school safety plan.

“(b) Awards.—

“(1) Application.—To seek an award under this section, an eligible entity shall submit an application to the Director at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Director may require. At minimum, any such application shall include evidence of the applicant’s expertise in comprehensive school safety and school climate, including evidence-based violence prevention for students and educators, suicide prevention, student mental health, and school security.
“(2) PREFERENCE.—In making awards under this section, the Director shall, as appropriate, give preference to eligible entities that have existing relationships with local schools, particularly those in rural, Tribal, or low-resourced communities, as applicable by the proposed geographical area, or minority-serving institutions described in sections 371(a) and 326(e)(1) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1067q(a) and 1063b(e)(1)).

“(3) USE OF FUNDS.—Activities eligible for funding through an award under this section include the following:

“(A) Developing communications materials for and disseminating to schools, educators, parents, legal guardians, and youth, and increasing State-wide or intrastate regional public awareness of evidence-based research and best practices for school safety and student mental health.

“(B) Conducting individualized consultations with schools to research and analyze a school’s existing school safety and student mental health policies, or developing or improving, in coordination with a school, a customized school safety and student mental health plan to
fit the individualized, age- and developmentally-appropriate needs of such school community based on evidence-based best practices.

“(C) Assisting schools in the implementation of their customized school safety and mental health plan, including the following:

“(i) Identification of Federal or State government funding for enactment of the plan, in whole or in part.

“(ii) Provide training, resources, or technical assistance to assist schools in applying for such Federal or State government funding.

“(iii) Providing training, resources, and technical assistance to educate school staff and families regarding the policies and procedures of the plan.

“(4) MATCHING REQUIREMENT.—The Federal share of the cost of activities for which a grant is made to an eligible entity under this section may not exceed 95 percent of the total cost of such activities.

“(c) AWARD ADMINISTRATION.—

“(1) TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—
The Director, in consultation with the Secretary of Education and the Youth Advisory Council (estab-
lished pursuant to paragraph (2)(C)), shall provide
training and technical assistance to State-wide or
intrastate regional School Safety Development Cen-
ters on the following:

“(A) Best practices for individualized con-
sulting with schools based on their unique needs
for implementation in accordance with sub-
section (b)(3).

“(B) Evidence-based practices and rec-
ommendations established under section 2220D
that are presented in a clear and concise man-
ner for schools and the public.

“(2) SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS.—

“(A) PERSONNEL.—The Director shall
hire additional personnel and contractors with
expertise in school mental health and school ad-
ministration to provide additional subject mat-
ter expertise in implementing evidence-based
programming within schools to carry out para-
graph (1).

“(B) DETAILEE.—

“(i) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of
Education shall detail to the Agency an
employee of the Department of Education
to assist in the provision of the training
and technical assistance described in paragraph (1).

“(ii) Reimbursement.—The Secretary of Education shall reimburse the Director for any costs associated with the detailee under clause (i).

“(C) Youth Advisory Council.—

“(i) Establishment.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this section, the Director shall establish and convene a Youth Advisory Council for the purpose of providing advice on the implementation of this section.

“(ii) Participation.—The Youth Advisory Council shall include participation from the following:

“(I) Parents, academic experts, mental health professionals, and members of civil society with respect to the prevention of violence in schools.

“(II) Youth representation, including youth who have experienced school violence.

“(d) Report to Congress.—Not later than two years after the date of the enactment of this section and
annually thereafter, the Director shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security, the Committee on the Judiciary, the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate a report on actions taken by the Director to implement this section, including information relating to the following:

“(1) The name, location, and number of eligible entities in each State receiving awards under this section.

“(2) A comparative analysis of actions recommended in school safety plans by School Safety Development Centers.

“(3) A formal evaluation of whether the activities described in subsection (b)(3) were implemented by eligible entities receiving awards under this section.

“(4) An assessment of the effectiveness of the School Safety Development Centers in assisting eligible entities that received awards under this section, including instances of averted violence, includ-
ing self-harm, if applicable, and policy recommendations for improved effectiveness.

“(e) Rule of Construction.—

“(1) Waiver of Requirements.—Nothing in this section may be construed to establish, satisfy, or waive any requirement under any of the following:

“(A) Title II of the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12131 et seq.).


“(C) Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d et seq.).

“(D) Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. 1681 et seq.).


“(2) No Effect on Other Laws.—Nothing in this section may be construed to preclude or contradict any other provision of law authorizing training in the use of firearms.

“(f) Authorization of Appropriations.—
“(1) IN GENERAL.—To carry out this section, there are authorized to be appropriated $25,000,000 for fiscal years 2025 through 2029.

“(2) RESTRICTION ON USE OF FUNDS.—Amounts made available to carry out this section may not be used to—

“(A) consult or train any school or person in the use of firearms; or

“(B) hire school personnel or school-based contractors.

“(g) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—The term ‘eligible entities’ means any of the following:

“(A) A State.

“(B) A State educational agency (as such term is defined in section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801)).

“(C) A Tribal educational agency (as such term is defined in section 6132 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7452)).

“(D) An institute of higher education eligible for assistance under title III of the Higher
Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1051 et seq.).

“(E) A Tribal College or University (as such term is defined in section 313 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1059c)).

“(2) EVIDENCE-BASED.—The term ‘evidence-based’ has the meaning given such term in section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

“(3) SCHOOL.—The term ‘school’ has the meaning given such term in section 2704 of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (34 U.S.C. 10554).

“(4) SCHOOL SAFETY PLAN.—The term ‘school safety plan’ means a set of common actions schools can take to address the foundational elements of school safety, including designated staff, school climate and mental health, reporting systems, threat assessment, emergency planning, educator training, student prevention training, exercises and drills, site assessments, and recovery plans.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in section 1(b) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 2220E the following new item:

“Sec. 2220F. School Safety Development Center program.”.