

# ALYSSA'S LAW SIGNED BY GOVERNOR: ENCOURAGING SCHOOLS TO INSTALL SILENT PANIC ALARM SYSTEMS

*Hodgson Russ Education Alert*  
June 24, 2022

On June 23, 2022, Governor Hochul signed Alyssa's Law, which requires school districts to consider the installation of silent panic alarm systems as a component of a district-wide safety plan. For those of you who attended our School Safety Webinar on Wednesday, June 8, 2022, you might recall that we identified that this legislation was awaiting Governor Hochul's signature after its passage in the State Assembly and Senate. This bill supplements an aggressive public education campaign in New York focusing on educators and mental health professionals in the face of recent mass shootings in Buffalo, New York and Uvalde, Texas.

Schools have long been required to develop specific safety plans so that in the event of an emergency, there can be an organized and coordinated response between the school district and first responders. However, until the passage of Alyssa's Law, the development of these plans did not require the consideration of panic alarm systems. Effective immediately, school districts are required to contemplate the usefulness of installing such systems - which can quickly and directly alert law enforcement authorities in the event of a safety emergency - when developing district-wide safety plans. The bill also expressly authorizes the inclusion of these systems within building-level emergency response plans.

Additionally, Alyssa's Law authorizes school districts to implement panic alarm systems as a mobile or computer application. School districts in states that already have Alyssa's Law legislation, such as Florida, have touted that these systems are compatible with smartphone apps that would allow faculty and staff to report a life-threatening or emergency situation requiring response from local law enforcement with a silent panic button directly on their phone.

The estimated costs associated with the purchase of silent panic alarm systems is typically several thousand dollars. However, school districts may seek reimbursement from the state, or pursue state building aid funding, for the cost of these systems. Additionally, school districts may consider utilizing available federal funds, such as CARES Act funds, for this purpose.

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School district safety teams should prepare now by reviewing and/or revising existing building-level and district-wide safety plans in advance of the upcoming school year. If you have any questions about Alyssa's Law or how this new legislation will affect your school, please contact [Lindsay Menasco](#) (716.848.1214), [Jeffrey F. Swiatek](#) (716.848.1449), [Andrew Freedman](#) (716.848.1332) or any member of our [Education Law Group](#).