



A Division of the State Bureau of Investigation

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# Report to the North Carolina General Assembly

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Artificial Intelligence (AI)  
School Safety Pilot Program

*N.C. Session Law 2023-134, sec. 7.36.(h)*

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**Date Due: Jan. 15, 2026**

## **NC STATE BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION**

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**NC CENTER FOR SAFER SCHOOLS** A Division of the State Bureau of Investigation

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### **CENTER FOR SAFER SCHOOLS MISSION**

Develop and implement strategies to ensure that students are safer in schools.

### **CENTER FOR SAFER SCHOOLS VISION**

All schools in the state are safer, secure and offer an environment conducive to learning.

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## LEGISLATIVE DIRECTIVE

N.C. Session Law 2023-134, Section 7.36.(h) states:

“Artificial Intelligence (AI) Pilot. – Of the funds appropriated to the Department of Public Instruction by this act for the grants provided in this section for the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the Department shall allocate (i) three million two hundred thousand dollars (\$3,200,000) as a directed grant to New Hanover County Schools and (ii) two million dollars (\$2,000,000) as a directed grant to Davidson County Schools for an AI School Safety Pilot Program. In conducting the Pilot Program, participating public school units shall comply with the following:

(1) Funds allocated for the Pilot Program shall be used for the implementation of a school safety system that integrates AI technology into existing cameras, video management systems, and alerting protocols.

(1a) The proposed school safety solution must offer the following performance capabilities:

- a. Threatening Object Detection.
- b. Intruder Detection.
- c. Person Down Detection.
- d. Door Open Detection.
- e. Tag and Track.
- f. Facial Recognition.
- g. Forensic Face Search.
- h. License Plate Reader

(1b) The participating public-school units shall contract with the same vendor for the Pilot Program. The vendor shall be determined by the first public school unit to enter into a contract for a school safety solution.

(2) No later than January 15, 2026, the participating public-school units, in coordination with the Center for Safer Schools, shall report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee the following information:

- a. The schools that participated in the Pilot Program.
- b. How grant funds were spent.
- c. The impact the Pilot Program had on school safety outcomes.
- d. Any noted capabilities of the AI system that could not be accomplished by more traditional safety measures.
- e. Any other information the participating public-school units or the Department deem relevant to the report.”

This report will serve as the required reporting by the Center for Safer Schools as indicated in N.C. Session Law 2023-134, Section 7.36.(h).

## BACKGROUND

N.C. Session Law 2023-134 (House Bill 259) was passed in October 2023. In October 2024, the Center for Safer Schools sent letters to both Davidson County Schools and New Hanover County Schools instructing them to submit the answers to the questions below and to attach any contracts, RFPs or proposals by November 2024:

1. Name of each school and their grade levels that participated in the Pilot Program.
2. Explain in detail how the funds were spent, how much was spent and were they able to utilize all the funds.
  - a. Amount spent for Personnel/Salary
  - b. Amount spent for Travel
    - i. Lodging
    - ii. Mileage
    - iii. Per Diem
  - c. Amount spent for Materials and Supplies
  - d. Amount spent for Equipment
  - e. Amount spent on Contractual Services
  - f. Amount spent on Indirect Costs
3. If not able to use all the funding, what were your challenges?
4. Describe the impact that this program had on School Safety in your PSU.
5. Explain what the AI system accomplished that would not have been accomplished by traditional safety measures.
6. Any other comments or concerns that you would like to add about the AI Pilot.

Davidson County Schools responded that Eviden was chosen as the provider for the AI pilot in Wallburg Elementary School (K-5), Tyro Middle School (6-8) and Central Davidson High School (9-12). Officials indicated that they were in the process of finalizing a contract.

New Hanover County Schools responded with an anticipated provider contract award date of December 2024. Officials provided anticipated dates for site surveys and design (January 2025); installation and commissioning (February-March 2025); testing and training (April-May 2025); and services activated (June 2025).

In December 2024, the Center for Safer Schools moved to the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation (SBI). This transition was part of a legislative change, specifically the passage of Session Law 2024-57/Senate Bill 382, which aimed to enhance school safety initiatives. As

part of this transition, the Center's functions – including its responsibilities for school safety initiatives and support – were transferred to the SBI.

This shift includes appropriations and the management of resources – including safety grant funding, services and programs previously handled by the Center at the Department of Public Instruction – which have been integrated into the Center at the SBI.

The Executive Director of the Center, Karen W. Fairley, continues her role under SBI, focusing on promoting safer learning environments for North Carolina's K-12 schools.

## UPDATES

### **Davidson County Schools**

In November 2025, representatives from the Center for Safer Schools (CFSS) met with Davidson County Schools officials review progress on the district's Artificial Intelligence (AI) safety project.

The Davidson County Board of Education sought a third-party, independent assessment in both technology and finance to ensure the project's integrity and accountability:

- **Technology Assessment:** Conducted by Align Technology in partnership with Legion Cyberworks. The findings were favorable and supported the district's proposed approach.
- **Financial Assessment:** Although the district was unable to secure an independent third-party financial assessment due to high costs, Grant Thornton provided a financial report that was also favorable.

During the October 2025 Davidson County Board of Education meeting, the AI project received full approval. The contract with Eviden was finalized in late October 2025.

In November 2025, Davidson County Schools had scheduled meetings with the project's integrators (BAS) and Eviden to coordinate the software installation. The district was in the process of purchasing the necessary servers to support implementation.

### **New Hanover County Schools**

In March 2025, the New Hanover County Board of Education decided to turn down the AI pilot program, which was initially proposed to enhance school safety by integrating AI technology with existing security systems. The board's vote was 4-3 against the program.

### **House Bill 125**

The third edition of House Bill 125 – filed in June 2025 – would have modified Session Law 2023-134 to include an allocation of “the unexpended and unencumbered portion of three million two hundred thousand dollars (\$3,200,000) previously directed to New Hanover County Schools as a directed grant to Alamance-Burlington Schools.”

HB 125 also would have added a section to SL 2023-134 mandating that “the nonrecurring funds appropriated for the directed grants under Section 7.36(h) of this act shall not revert to the General Fund but shall remain available for the purposes for which they were appropriated until June 30, 2027.”

Those provisions would have taken effect in July 2025. However, HB 125 passed as SL 2025-89 in August 2025 without provisions regarding the AI School Safety Pilot Program.

## **NEXT STEPS**

The Artificial Intelligence (AI) School Safety Pilot Program is still in the implementation phase, so its impact cannot be outlined at the time of this report. The Center for Safer Schools will continue to monitor the program's progress and plan to meet with Davidson County Schools representatives in late January 2026 for an update.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The Center for Safer Schools recommends that the unexpended and unencumbered portion of \$3.2 million previously directed to New Hanover County Schools be appropriated as a directed grant to the Alamance-Burlington School System for the AI School Safety Pilot Program.