

# Report Highlights

## Safe Schools Against Violence in Education (SAVE) Act - Safety Plans

### Audit Objective

Determine whether 17 school districts used their resources and two charter schools (collectively referred to as schools in this report) used their financial resources to develop, adopt, file and implement district-wide school safety plans and building-level emergency response plans in compliance with the New York State Safe Schools Against Violence in Education (SAVE) Act.<sup>1</sup>

### Key Findings

Schools must do more to meet the minimum SAVE Act requirements.

- None of the safety plans met all the minimum requirements.
- Two schools did not have a safety plan.
- Eighteen schools did not have a safety team or did not have all the required members.
- No school met all of the annual safety training requirements.

### Key Recommendations

The governing boards (boards) must:

- Appoint all required members to the safety team.
- Adopt the safety plan annually by September 1 after holding a 30-day public comment period and a public hearing.

The Chief Emergency Officer must ensure that:

- The safety team develops a plan and annually reviews and updates it prior to board approval.
- The safety plan includes all minimum requirements and is filed with the State Education Department (SED) after adoption.
- All staff are trained annually and only certify to SED if all staff completed the required training.

We communicated our audit results on the schools' district-wide safety plans and building-level emergency response plans to school officials and SED confidentially.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For one school, we only reviewed the 2018-19 district-wide school safety plan.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

### Background

The SAVE Act generally requires schools to develop, update, adopt, file and implement district-wide school safety plans and building-level emergency response plans annually. Such plans are designed to prevent or minimize the effects of violent incidents and emergencies and facilitate coordination with local, county and State resources. We audited 17 school districts and two charter schools, as listed in Appendix A.

Boards must ensure compliance with the SAVE Act. They must annually adopt a safety plan designating a chief emergency officer and appoint a team to review the plan. The chief emergency officer has responsibilities that include ensuring the plans are updated, ensuring staff understand the plans, and coordinating emergency training.

#### Quick Facts

Schools	19
Total Enrollment	110,035
Total Staff	24,304
School Educational Buildings	163

### Audit Period

July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018. For one school, the audit period was July 1, 2017 to March 7, 2019. As described in Appendix D, for certain audit tests we extended the audit period.