



**STATE OF ARKANSAS**  
ASA HUTCHINSON  
GOVERNOR

October 12, 2022

Arkansas General Assembly  
1 Capitol Mall, Fifth Floor  
Little Rock, AR 72201

Members of the Arkansas General Assembly:

The massacre that occurred at Robb Elementary School earlier this year was a somber yet urgent reminder we must remain vigilant in our efforts to protect children in our classrooms. That is why I reconvened the Arkansas School Safety Commission in an effort to prevent our state from experiencing a similar tragedy. Composed of 24 members from the educational, mental health, and public safety professions, the final report was submitted to my office earlier this month and includes recommendations in the following fields: physical security, intelligence and communications, cybersecurity, emergency operations plans and drills, law enforcement and security, and mental health and prevention.

It is important to note that while the findings of the School Safety Commission are recommendations—not requirements—districts are working to implement as many measures as possible. With approval from the Arkansas Legislature, I have allocated \$50 million in state grants to serve as a source of funding for the Commission's suggestions, which includes updated technology, expanded staff, and protective infrastructure. School districts are also encouraged to apply for federal grant funding through the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act to defray costs.

The Commission also made some recommendations that would require further support from the Arkansas legislature. While the aforementioned \$50 million in state grant monies will aid in making needed improvements to school safety, recurring funding is necessary to fully implement the findings of the report.

Additionally, the Commission suggested the legislature change the language in Arkansas Code §12-13-109 which currently requires teachers and administrators to keep doors and exits unlocked during school hours. As witnessed with Robb Elementary and in other school shootings, unlocked doors and entrances allowed the shooter(s) to enter the building easily and without much commotion, thereby reducing the amount of time teachers had to secure their classrooms. The Commission recommends Arkansas Code §12-13-109 be changed to “keep all exiting doors and classroom doors closed and locked during school hours, with the exception of transition times. No person shall be impeded from building egress per the current State Fire Prevention Code and the ADA Standards for Accessible Design.” Your support is necessary to making this change.

Enclosed is the official report of the Arkansas School Safety Commission in its entirety. I appreciate your support of the Commission’s efforts the last several months and your cooperation in making our schools a place where children can thrive.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Asa Hutchinson", written over a horizontal line.

Asa Hutchinson