

The logo features the text "Louisiana Believes" in a green, hand-drawn style font, underlined. The background is a light blue watercolor wash with darker blue and white accents, suggesting a map of Louisiana.

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**Request for Information
For
Silent Alarm Systems in Schools**

Issued May 16, 2019

Responses Requested by Friday, June 14, 2019

**State of Louisiana
Louisiana Department of Education**

Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary | page 3
2. Agency and Project Overview | page 4
3. RFI Requirements and Process | page 5
4. RFI Response | page 6
5. Questions | page 8
6. Supplemental Information (Optional) | page 9

1. Executive Summary

Background

As tragedies at elementary and secondary schools have escalated over the past several years, leaders in education, law enforcement, and emergency response have collaborated at state and local levels to strengthen preparedness and crisis management. In addition to re-evaluating plans, enhancing physical security of campuses, and increasing the presence of security officers, states and local communities have also considered the use of new technologies that may prove beneficial in quickly and effectively responding to an active shooter situation.

During its 2018 Regular Session, the Louisiana State Senate passed Senate Concurrent Resolution 8, urging and requesting the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) to study the feasibility and cost of installing silent alarms in all elementary and secondary school classrooms. The LDOE responded with a preliminary [report](#) based on a scan of other state practices, but concluded that additional research would be necessary to better understand how such systems work, costs of installation and ongoing operations, and the feasibility of pursuing such systems for Louisiana schools.

In addition to this study request by the Legislature, Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards created a Blue Ribbon Task Force on School Safety during the summer of 2018 that has met several times to address related priorities. The Task Force has brought together local and state-level education leaders, child advocates, and experts from emergency response departments to discuss ways of enhancing school safety, security, and crisis management and response, particularly during active shooter incidents. The work of this panel has resulted in a comprehensive assessment of public school facility security, an improved understanding of the availability of on-campus security personnel, new opportunities for training and consultation with regard to the evaluation and execution of school crisis management response plans, and a more robust effort at the state level to support local needs in these areas.

Through this Request for Information (RFI), the LDOE invites school leaders, emergency response experts, national organizations focused on school safety, and vendors of silent alarms to share information that can be used by Louisiana state and local leaders to determine if the installation and use of silent alarms is feasible and potentially advantageous as part of a comprehensive effort to enhance school safety and improve the ability of emergency personnel to more effectively respond to school needs. Information provided will be shared with the Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission on School Safety, Louisiana's elementary and secondary school leaders, and lawmakers.

Overview

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, silent alarms are listed as one of the external indicators for “school safety and security measures.” When sorted by the percentage of American schools that implement the practice, silent alarms rank fifteenth on this list of indicators. While silent alarms rank low, the data is new and Louisiana schools already employ many of the other recommended strategies, particularly those that are less expensive to implement, such as restricted building entry, visitor sign-in, and school uniforms.

In specific reference to silent alarms, research suggests there are several various factors to consider when weighing costs and implementation strategies, which may include any of the following:

- the platform type or brand of alarm (ranging from cell-phone apps to hardware)
- the number of mobile and/or immobile panic buttons in the school
- functions and system-wide integration(s) of the alarm
- flashing alarm lights
- video monitoring
- maintenance and data storage

In terms of the total cost, there is little data available at this time.

While national data suggests that proactive, preventive, & restorative safety and security measures are most foundational, and each LEA and school site should have a comprehensive threat and crisis plan, the LDOE seeks to ensure that the appropriate tools are available in the case of an on-campus threat, including when and how to involve law enforcement.

The costs for implementing silent alarms in all schools remain unclear.

2. Agency and Project Overview

The Louisiana Department of Education, led by State Superintendent of Education John White and based in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, organizes, plans, supervises, directs, executes, and is responsible for the functions and programs vested within its agency by the Louisiana Legislature and the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. The agency also regularly partners with state and local officials and school leaders to address matters of mutual concern, including but not limited to school safety.

The LDOE seeks information about the use of and costs associated with silent alarm systems from the following individuals and entities:

- Educational (school or school system) administrators
- Non-profit organizations focused on school safety

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- School security experts
- Alarm system vendors/providers

In order to gather more detailed information about available options and possible costs, and given the unique needs of school facilities and campuses, the LDOE seeks to learn:

- What Louisiana and out-of-state vendors provide such products and services?
- What features do their systems have?
- What is required in terms of installation and on-going support?
- What collaboration is required between schools and local emergency responders?
- What options exist to implement silent alarms at the classroom, building, and campus levels?

Following the receipt and review of this requested information, the LDOE will summarize all responses to share with Louisiana policymakers, school leaders, and state and local emergency response partners to aid in their planning.

3. RFI Requirements and Process

This RFI is issued as a means of technical or application-based data discovery and information gathering. This RFI should not be construed as a solicitation, nor should it be construed as an obligation on the part of the State of Louisiana to pursue any relationships, make any purchases, or enter into any agreement.

Event	Date
RFI shared via press release	May 16, 2019
Deadline for receipt of responses	Friday, June 14, 2019

In order to submit an electronic response, please email the requested information on or before Friday, June 14, 2019, to leslie.hill@la.gov, using the subject "Silent Alarm Systems."

Hard copies or other materials referenced or provided in response to this RFI may be delivered to the address below. Please allow sufficient mail delivery time to ensure receipt by the time requested.

In-Person Delivery

Mailing Address

Louisiana Department of Education 1201 North Third Street Baton Rouge, LA 70802-5243 Attn: Leslie Hill Re: Silent Alarm Systems	Louisiana Department of Education P.O. Box 94064 Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9064 Attn: Leslie Hill Re: Silent Alarm Systems
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Liabilities of Agency

This RFI merely requests information about the feasibility and cost associated with the scope of potential products and services. The RFI process represents no obligation on behalf of the State whatsoever.

This RFI does not commit the Louisiana Department of Education to pay any costs incurred in the preparation or submission of any response to the RFI.

Confidentiality and RFI Ownership

All materials submitted in response to this RFI shall become the property of the LDOE and will not be returned. The LDOE will use these results to draft a summary of its findings. The LDOE, other Louisiana state agencies, and/or local government agencies may utilize the information received through this RFI to draft a competitive solicitation for any combination of services, products, or deliverables. Selection or rejection of a response shall not affect this right.

Confidential Information, Trade Secrets, and Proprietary Information

All records containing proprietary or trade secret information submitted by a developer, owner, or manufacturer to a public body shall contain a cover sheet that provides in bold type **"DOCUMENT CONTAINS CONFIDENTIAL PROPRIETARY OR TRADE SECRET INFORMATION."** The developer, owner, or manufacturer shall clearly mark each instance of information which is, in his opinion, proprietary or trade secret information. Only information which is in the nature of legitimate trade secrets or non-published financial data will be deemed proprietary or confidential. Any material within a response identified as such must be clearly marked in the response and will be handled in accordance with the Louisiana Public Records Act, R.S. 44:1-44 and applicable rules and regulations. Any response marked as confidential or proprietary in its entirety will be rejected without consideration or recourse.

4. RFI Response

Contact Information

Respondents are asked to include the following information:

Contacts	
Primary contact regarding this submission:	Name:
	Business Address:
	Email Address:
	Phone:
	Title or Role in Organization:

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	Area of Expertise:
What inspired you or your organization to respond to this request for information?	
Organization website URL:	
How long has the organization been in this type of business or addressed these types of issues?	

Business Model for Contracting of Services (Optional)

While this Request for Information aims to solicit information about the feasibility and costs associated with the installation and implementation of silent alarm systems in elementary and secondary schools, responders may choose to describe their approach to a contract for similar services without providing cost information, and may do by providing the following information:

- How does the respondent define a *silent alarm system* in the context of school facilities?
- How may the silent alarm system be integrated with crisis management response plans?
- Explain silent alarm system platform pricing models. For example, is the pricing model on a tiered basis, and if so how, by the number of rooms, buildings, alarm buttons, etc?
- What are one-time and ongoing costs of hardware, maintenance, and support?
- Are services priced separately from hardware and software?
- Is service pricing fixed or on a per-activity or per-hour basis?
- Is there any other information you believe Louisiana needs to consider?
- Describe any suggested service level agreements.
- Describe installation and implementation timeframes.
- Describe ongoing maintenance and upgrades.
- How is the use of silent alarm systems evaluated for effectiveness?

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Response Format

Responses to the prompts below should total no more than ten pages but may include additional attachments and/or links to online resources as needed.

Please review the following list of questions and respond as completely as possible to as many questions as are appropriate for you or your organization. If your response to any question requires additional material, please include this material in an Appendix to your response, with a clear reference to the applicable question(s).

Questions
<p>General Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In the context of maximizing student safety, and in response to the Louisiana Legislature’s inquiry, what is your definition of a <i>silent alarm system</i>? What factors are most important in determining whether installing silent alarm systems in Louisiana’s schools is feasible?• Has your organization supported the use of silent alarms in schools or other large organizations? If so, at what scale and how did their use enhance responsiveness to emergency situations?• What benefits and challenges have you or your organization experienced that are associated with silent alarm systems in schools or other large facilities/campuses?• Describe the platform, its components, and how it can integrate with existing components or data sources, as well as any third-party alliances, relationships, or dependencies utilized to deliver any part of any service associated with the platform or solution.
<p>Installation and Implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the minimum recommended or required specifications for using such a system?• What options exist to maximize use of such a system given limited funding?• Describe the initial set-up process, customer service structure, data analytics, user access, permissions, tiered monitoring, and how information systems are maintained, updated, stored, or purged.• Describe necessary collaborations between schools, local emergency response agencies, and other critical partners to ensure effectiveness of the system.
<p>Access, Monitoring, and Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What types of accommodations and accessibility features are available?• Describe the system’s ability to interact with multiple media types that may include audio, video, voice, photo, or any other unique technologies that may benefit the user.• Describe any regular process(es) used to monitor the system’s functionality.• How and where does the system store data?• What are the necessary project management structures to ensure successful implementation of a project of this size and scope?• Describe your organization’s approach to staying abreast of technological advances that may help to more effectively address school safety and emergency response over time, and how such advancements are used to upgrade or enhance the system.
<p>Anticipating Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the anticipated level of initial and ongoing training needed for users, including system administrators/technical support staff, as well as school-level users (school leaders, faculty/staff, and possibly students)?
<p>Additional information may be added to responses to the above questions and/or included in the appendix.</p>

5. Supplemental Information (Optional)

In addition to the written portion, respondents will be offered an opportunity to include a URL or link as supplemental information to their responses in order to showcase or demo their product or service.

Respondents sharing a storage drive, CD, or DVD must mail their supplemental information. Please note that such items will not be returned.

Thank you for your willingness to share information related to this important topic. We appreciate your assistance in helping Louisiana to enhance school safety and emergency response for the benefit of our children and school staff.