



# Bill Draft Summary: School Safety Amendments

Prepared for the School Security Task Force | November 30, 2023

The Utah Legislature created the School Security Task Force in 2023 ([H.B. 61](#)) to address safety and security in Utah's schools. Statute directs the task force to develop legislation for introduction in the 2024 General Session.

## Updates in the November 30, 2023 Draft

- Clarifies the definition of a public and private school for the fire code amendments. (*Sections 1 and 2; Lines 128-130 and 154-156*)
- Directs county sheriffs to coordinate communication between local law enforcement agencies for school safety. (*Section 7; Lines 438-444*)
- Requires school guardians to complete a mental health screening. (*Section 8; Lines 519-520*)
- Requires the school safety and security officer be a former law enforcement officer who did not have disciplinary issues leading to dismissal. (*Section 22; Lines 1252-1255*)
- Requires the school safety center and state security chief to determine how to apply the bill requirements to an online school, including those with a physical location. (*Section 28; Lines 1565-1566*)
- Renames the state board's school safety program the school safety center. (*Section 29; Lines 1516-1518*)
- Clarifies the difference between building safety evaluations and behavioral threat assessment. (*Multiple sections*)

## Key Bill Provisions

This document summarizes the key provisions of the legislation developed by the task force.

### Armed School Security

*53G-8-701.5; Line 1170*

Requires every public and private school to have at least one of the armed security personnel listed below on campus when school is in session. Three of the four allowed types of armed school security – school safety and security officers, school guardians, and contract security guards – are new positions created in this bill.

This bill requires school safety and security officers, school guardians, and contract security guards to complete training with school administrators twice a year on the safety and security infrastructure of the school where they are assigned.

*School Resource Officer (53G-8-702, Line 1335; 53G-8-703, Line 1375)*

- Training for school personnel and SROs: Existing law requires the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) to provide a training program for school principals, personnel, and school resource officers (SROs). This bill would require this training annually and require the state security chief to consult on the training program.
- Contracts for SRO services: A school district or school may not require or prohibit mandatory rotations of school resource officers.



#### *School Safety and Security Officer (53G-8-701.7, Line 1247)*

School safety and security officers are former law enforcement officers hired by a school. They are employed as school or school district employees and not simultaneously by a law enforcement agency. The bill requires these individuals comply with multiple requirements:

- Trained and certified under the Peace Officer Standards and Training Act (Title 53, Chapter 13).
- Complete required checks for law enforcement transferring from one agency to another.

#### *School Guardian (53-22-105; Line 452)*

Volunteer school employee who participates in required training. Guardians may not be a principal, teacher, or other person who primarily works with students. The state security chief provides a \$500 one-time stipend. Requirements include:

- Valid concealed carry permit.
- Initial training on firearms from the county security chief on firearms, de-escalation, coordinating with law enforcement, and administering basic trauma first aid, among other things (within 6 months).
- Annual, four-hour training from the county security chief on firearms.
- Complete a mental health screening.

#### *Contract Security Guards (53G-8-704, Line 1446)*

Security guards hired under contract with schools and school districts must meet specific requirements and may conceal or open carry a firearm on school grounds. Requirements include:

- Valid concealed carry permit.
- Training from the county security chief on gun safety in a school setting, the role of armed guards, and coordinating with law enforcement during an active threat.
- Contracts must include:
  - A detailed job description.
  - Detailed information of the rights of students under state and federal law regarding information privacy, searches, questioning, and arrests.

### **Additional School Personnel**

#### *School Safety and Security Director (53G-8-701.8; Line 1292)*

Each local education agency and private school must designate a school safety and security director as a point of contact for the county security chief, local law enforcement, and the state security chief and do the following:

- Collaborate and maintain communications with various school and district employees and law enforcement.
- Participate in many of the trainings required for all armed school guards.
- May temporarily fill in for an SRO, school safety and security officer, school guardian, or armed security guard.
- Participate on the multidisciplinary team conducting behavior threat assessment.



### *School Safety and Security Specialist (53G-8-701.6, Line 1190)*

This bill provides greater guidance for job responsibilities for the school security specialists, currently required at each public and private school. This position is responsible for coordinating safety and security activities at the school.

- Principals may not serve in this position.
- Conduct a building safety assessment annually.
- Participate on the multidisciplinary team conducting behavior threat assessment.
- Coordinate with local first responder agencies on safety and security drills.
- Coordinate required staff trainings.

### **State Security Chief**

*53-22-102, Line 358*

The state security chief position was created by [H.B. 61](#) (2023). This individual is responsible for state-level oversight of school safety and security issues. This bill updates the responsibilities of the position to include, among others, the following new provisions:

- Establish minimum building safety and security standards for public and private schools, in coordination with USBE.
- Consult with USBE to develop or establish the model critical incident response that all schools and law enforcement must use during a threat.
- For armed security personnel in schools:
  - Oversee the school guardian program and approve required training.
  - Decide on the mental health crisis intervention training required of school safety and security officers.
  - Review and approve USBE's SRO training program.
  - Create a method for law enforcement to quickly identify security personnel.
  - Select training for school safety and security specialists and directors.

### **County Security Chief**

*53-22-103, Line 428*

Current law requires each county sheriff to identify an individual in the sheriff's office to coordinate school safety issues. This bill renames that individual the "county security chief" and outlines their responsibilities:

- Assist in creating a building threat assessment.
- Collaborate and maintain communications with each school safety and security specialist and director in the county.
- Administer trainings on firearms required for school guardians and school safety and security officers.
- Administer the school guardian program.
- Ensure school construction projects comply with minimum safety standards before occupancy.



## Minimum Safety and Security Standards for School Facilities

*53-22-102(3)(b) and (c), Lines 374-377; 53-22-103, Line 429; 53E-3-702, Line 835; 53E-3-706, Line 877; 53G-8-805, Line 1613*

This bill requires all new school construction and reconstruction projects to meet minimum safety and security standards established by the state security chief before occupancy, like fire code requirements. These include, among others:

- Two-way intercom systems and panic buttons in each classroom (Alyssa's Law).
- Video surveillance.
- Limited secure entries.
- Ballistic glass or security film on all interior and ground-floor exterior windows.
- Periodically assess facilities and develop plans for needed improvements.

## Standardized Critical Incident Response

*53-22-102(3)(k), Line 401; 53G-8-802, Line 1507; 53G-8-803, Line 1596*

Require every school, public and private, and first responder agency to implement the critical incident response protocol selected by the state security chief, in consultation with USBE. The response plans must include:

- Reunification plan protocols, including a location that can be easily changed and communicated depending on the emergency type and location.
- Required components of communications plans.
- Protocols for planning and safety drills.
- Standardized response protocol terminology.
- Protocols for conducting a building threat assessment during an incident.
- Establishing incident command.
- Recommendations for safety equipment in schools, including first aid supplies.
- Using panic alert devices.

## School Safety Data

*53-10-302(7) and (8), Lines 310-315; 53B-17-1202, Line 605; 53E-3-518(3)(a), Lines 752-755; 53G-6-806, Line 1067*

Provides school and district officials, state and local leaders, students, parents, and other community members access to information about safety issues in their local schools. The bill includes the following provisions:

- The parent portal must include school-level safety data and link to the public safety portal (see 53E-3-516; 63A-16-1002).
- USBE's school information management system must interface with the Department of Public Safety's statewide information and analysis center (SIAC), when appropriate, and the public safety portal.
- The state security chief determines the SafeUT data that will be reported to the state bureau of investigation's systems.



## Student Reintegration Plans

*53G-8-213, Line 1121*

Current law requires schools to develop a reintegration plan, including a multidisciplinary team, for students that have been arrested for, charged with, or adjudicated in the juvenile court for a violent felony. This bill **requires the multidisciplinary team to include the school safety and security director and specialist.**

## Mandatory Reporting for Threats of Violence Involving Schools

*53-22-106, Line 553*

Individuals in a position of special trust who work with children – such as teachers, school employees, and therapists – will be **mandatory reporters for threats of violence** made against a school, school employee, or student attending a school. These individuals must report to law enforcement, the local education agency that would be impacted, or the state security chief. The bill directs LEA and a local law enforcement agency to should coordinate on an investigation.

## Early Warning Systems

*53F-4-207, Line 952*

Each local education agency must use a digital early warning system, which helps schools and districts identify students in need of academic assistance and other potential academic and behavioral issues within a school and district. This bill requires all LEAs to have an early warning system and requires those systems to **include school safety violations**. LEAs may use the system selected by USBE or another system that meets criteria outlined in statute.

## Public Safety Answering Points

*53-10-302(7) and (8), Lines 310-315; 63H-7a-103, Line 1625; 63H-7a-208, Line 1667*

Directs the public safety answering points (PSAP) advisory committee to work with the Department of Public Safety and determine **what PSAP data will be shared with the SIAC.**

## Fire Code Exemptions for Communications Equipment

*15A-5-203, Line 77; 15A-5-205.5, Line 150*

Currently, fire code allows new and existing schools to be exempted from the requirement to have specific communications equipment. This bill removes that exemption, thus **requiring all new and existing schools to have specific types of communications equipment**, including bidirectional antennas.