

Effective 7/1/2026

53G-8-701.5 School safety needs assessment -- School safety personnel -- Alternative requirements.

- (1)
- (a) In accordance with Subsections (1)(c) through (e), no later than October 15 of an applicable year, an LEA shall:
 - (i) ensure a school safety needs assessment the state security chief selects in collaboration with the school safety center is conducted in accordance with Subsection (1)(b) for each school or K-12 campus within the LEA to determine the needs and deficiencies regarding:
 - (A) appropriate school safety personnel, including necessary supports, training, and policy creation for the personnel;
 - (B) physical building security and safety, including required upgrades to facilities and safety technology;
 - (C) a school's current threat and emergency response protocols, including any emergency response agreements with local law enforcement;
 - (D) student threat assessment information described in 53G-8-807;
 - (E) if applicable, a school's current visitor management protocols, including alignment with recommended best practices as described in Section 53G-8-806;
 - (F) cardiac emergency preparedness, including an inventory of whether automated external defibrillators are present and accessible, maintenance status, and current staff training offerings; and
 - (G) compliance with universal access key box requirements under Section 53G-8-805; and
 - (ii) report the results of the school safety needs assessment for each school within the LEA to the state security chief and the School Safety Center.
 - (b)
 - (i) The school safety specialist described in Section 53G-8-701.6, in collaboration with the county security chief or, regarding the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind, the state security chief, and with the local law enforcement of relevant jurisdiction over the school as described in Section 53-25-701, shall conduct the school safety needs assessment for each school.
 - (ii) A school safety and security director may fulfill the role of a school safety and security specialist in conducting the school safety needs assessment.
 - (c) The school safety needs assessment required under Subsection (1)(a)(i) shall be conducted at least once every three years for each school or K-12 campus.
 - (d) An LEA may implement a rotating or staggered schedule for conducting school safety needs assessments among the buildings within the LEA, provided that:
 - (i) each school within a K-12 campus is assessed at least once every three years; and
 - (ii) the LEA documents the rotating or staggered assessment schedule and shares this schedule with the state security chief, the School Safety Center, the county security chief regarding a school other than the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind, and the local law enforcement of relevant jurisdiction as described in Section 53-25-701.
 - (e) The LEA shall update the assessment schedule as necessary to ensure compliance with the three-year assessment requirement under Subsection (1)(c).
 - (f) The state board shall use the results of the school safety needs assessment for each school within an LEA to award a grant to an LEA in accordance with Section 53F-5-220.
 - (g) Any information or record detailing a school's needs assessment results is:
 - (i) a private, controlled, or protected record under Title 63G, Chapter 2, Government Records Access and Management Act; and

- (ii) available only to:
 - (A) the state security chief;
 - (B) the School Safety Center;
 - (C) members of an LEA governing board;
 - (D) administrators of the LEA and school the needs assessment concerns;
 - (E) only to the extent necessary to award a grant under Section 53F-5-220, the state board;
 - (F) the applicable school safety personnel described in Subsection (2);
 - (G) a local law enforcement agency that would respond to the school in case of an emergency; and
 - (H) the county security chief regarding a school other than the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind.
 - (h) An individual who intentionally or knowingly provides the information described in Subsection (1)(g) to an individual or entity not listed in Subsection (1)(g)(ii) is guilty of a class B misdemeanor.
- (2)
- (a) An LEA shall ensure each school within the LEA has the following school safety personnel:
 - (i) a school safety and security specialist described in Section 53G-8-701.6; and
 - (ii) based on the results of the needs assessment described in Subsection (1), at least one of the following:
 - (A) a school resource officer;
 - (B) a school guardian; or
 - (C) an armed school security guard.
 - (b) In addition to the school safety personnel described in Subsection (2)(a), an LEA shall designate a school safety and security director described in Section 53G-8-701.8.
 - (c) The same individual may serve in more than one of the roles listed in Subsections (2)(a) and (b) if the school notifies the School Safety Center and the state security chief of the decision to have the same individual serve in multiple roles as described in this Subsection (2).
 - (d) An LEA that designates a school guardian under Subsection (2)(a)(ii)(B) shall ensure that:
 - (i) the school guardian carries the firearm on the guardian's person during assigned duty hours as required in Section 53-22-105; and
 - (ii) the LEA does not adopt policies that require or encourage school guardians to store firearms in a manner that prevents immediate access during school hours.
 - (e) An LEA may implement the requirements of Subsection (2)(a)(ii) before the LEA has completed the school safety needs assessment described in Subsection (1).
 - (f) The state security chief in consultation with the School Safety Center shall establish a timeline for an LEA to comply with the school safety personnel requirements of this Subsection (2).
- (3)
- (a) An LEA, school administrator, or private school may apply to the state security chief for an approved alternative to the requirements described in:
 - (i) Section 53-22-105;
 - (ii) this section;
 - (iii) Section 53G-8-701.6;
 - (iv) Section 53G-8-701.8; and
 - (v) Section 53G-8-704.
 - (b) In approving or denying an application described in Subsection (3)(a), the state security chief may consider factors that impact a school or LEA's ability to adhere to the requirements of this section, including the school or LEA's:
 - (i) population size;

- (ii) staffing needs or capacity;
 - (iii) geographic location;
 - (iv) available funding; or
 - (v) general demonstration of need for an alternative to the requirements of this section.
- (4) A private school shall identify an individual at the private school to serve as the safety liaison with the local law enforcement of relevant jurisdiction and the state security chief.
- (5)
- (a) Notwithstanding Subsections (5)(b) and (c), an LEA may:
 - (i) pay guardian stipends using local funds when state funding is exhausted; or
 - (ii) supplement state funding with local funds.
 - (b) In accordance with Subsection (5)(c), the state board shall be responsible for administering guardian stipend funding in coordination with the state security chief.
 - (c)
 - (i) The state security chief shall:
 - (A) verify that a school guardian has met all requirements to be eligible for a stipend; and
 - (B) certify each eligible school guardian to the state board through completion of required training and active status in the program.
 - (ii) Upon certification by the state security chief, and subject to legislative appropriations, the state board shall provide each eligible school guardian with a one-time stipend.
 - (iii) The state board shall determine the amount of the stipend for each fiscal year based on:
 - (A) the amount appropriated by the Legislature for school guardian stipends;
 - (B) the projected number of school guardians statewide based on historical data and current program enrollment trends;
 - (C) a reserve allocation of up to 10% of the total appropriation to account for school guardians who join the program after the beginning of the school year; and
 - (D) any other factors the state board determines necessary to ensure equal distribution of the funds.
 - (iv) All school guardians certified as eligible during the same fiscal year shall receive the same stipend amount, regardless of:
 - (A) when during the fiscal year the school guardian completed training and became eligible; or
 - (B) the size, location, or type of school where the guardian serves.
 - (v) The state board shall:
 - (A) announce the stipend amount for each fiscal year no later than August 1, or within 30 days of legislative appropriations if appropriated after July 1;
 - (B) distribute stipends within 60 days of certification by the state security chief;
 - (C) maintain a reserve for school guardians who become eligible later in the fiscal year;
 - (D) if funds remain unallocated at the end of the fiscal year due to fewer school guardians than projected, carry forward the remaining funds to supplement the next fiscal year's stipend amount; and
 - (E) if eligible school guardians exceed projections and available funding, pro-rate the stipend amount equally among all eligible school guardians for that fiscal year and report the shortfall to the Legislature.
 - (vi) A school guardian is eligible to receive only one stipend regardless of:
 - (A) serving at multiple schools; or
 - (B) leaving and rejoining the program within the same fiscal year.

(vii) If a school guardian leaves the program for any reason after receiving a stipend, the school guardian is not required to return the stipend unless the state security chief determines the school guardian:

(A) obtained the stipend through fraud or misrepresentation; or

(B) failed to actually meet the eligibility requirements under Section 53-22-105.

Amended by Chapter 215, 2026 General Session