

## HB 84 – School Safety Amendments

HB 84 imposes several important requirements on Utah public schools. Although it may not be the most important element of a school's security posture, staffing has generated more questions than any other element of the bill. So, I will begin there.

### School security personnel

Each LEA must have a school security director and a school security specialist. In addition, while school is in session (meaning students are in class generating fundable enrollment), each school must have one of these flavors of armed guards on the school premises:

1. A school resource officer
2. An armed private security officer
3. An armed school guardian<sup>1</sup>

Unless an armed guard is serving two schools adjacent to each other, this person must be on the premises. If a guardian does not carry their weapon, it must be in a locked gun safe.

Recognizing that school size has a profound impact on the number and availability of personnel to fill these roles, HB 84 contemplates a couple different ways of fulfilling this minimum staffing requirement. For a small, single site charter school, the director can be the school security director and the school's armed guard. That school still needs a separate school security specialist.

A multi-site charter school will need a school security director for the entire LEA, and a separate school security specialist for each site. Plus, each site will need an armed guard on the premises when school is in session.

### Small (< 100 students) charter school

	Director	Teacher <sup>2</sup>	Other staff
<b>Security director</b>	Expected	Permitted	No
<b>Security specialist</b>	Only if they are not the security director	Permitted	Expected
<b>Armed guard</b>	Permitted, temporarily	Permitted	Permitted

<sup>1</sup> Per the legislation, the identity of any school guardian is available only to the state security chief, administrators at the school, local law enforcement that may respond in the event of an emergency. Moreover, any records detailing a person's participation in the school guardian program is not subject to requests under GRAMA.

<sup>2</sup> For purposes of these tables, teacher includes a school employee whose primary responsibilities require her to be in the classroom.

### Non-small charter school (> 100 students)

	<b>Director</b>	<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Other staff</b>
<b>Security director</b>	Expected	Permitted	Permitted
<b>Security specialist</b>	Only if they are not the security director	Permitted	Permitted
<b>Armed guard</b>	Permitted, temporarily	No	Permitted

### Multi-site charter school (> 100 students)

	<b>Director</b>	<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Other staff</b>
<b>Security director</b>	Expected	Permitted	No
<b>Security specialist</b>	Only if they are not the security director	Permitted	Expected
<b>Armed guard</b>	Permitted, temporarily	No	Expected

### Multi-site charter school (< 100 students)

	<b>Site director</b>	<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Other staff</b>
<b>Security director</b>	Permitted	Permitted	Permitted
<b>Security specialist</b>	Only if they are not the security director	Permitted	Permitted
<b>Armed guard</b>	Permitted, temporarily	Permitted	Expected

Importantly, schools with more than 350 students may not have the same person filling more than one safety role. Just as importantly, the school administrator must approve any school employee who wants to fill the armed guard role at that school.

Each of these safety officers needs to participate in various annual trainings. The specific requirements vary depending on the role. But each will have between 20 and 40 hours of annual training. The State Security Chief will develop those trainings, and the county security chiefs will administer them in each county. The State Security Chief and the State Board of Education will provide more info about those trainings in the next several months.

### Needs assessment

Each LEA must assess the security profile of each school annually. Each LEA must conduct these needs assessments by the end of the current calendar year, and then each year thereafter.<sup>3</sup> There are a couple different assessment tools the State Security Chief will recommend. Based on each school's assessment, the State Board of Education and the State Security Chief will allocate the \$100 million in one-time funding to LEAs/schools with the greatest need.

<sup>3</sup> Per the legislation, this needs assessment is not subject to GRAMA.

For example, while shatterproof overlays for windows on the ground floor are required, they are not as critical as limiting the number of points of entry, and forcing all entrants to the school through a vestibule. Rep. Wilcox and the State Security Chief will work with the State Board to make sure the one-time money attached to HB 84 goes to more foundational security needs, rather than less critical security needs.

While statute requires LEAs to complete this assessment by years end, UAPCS recommends that schools complete this assessment as soon as the assessment tool is available. The State Security Chief and Rep. Wilcox want the State Board to distribute these funds to schools as early as possible, ideally by the end of the summer.

Key variables that will be part of that assessment will include limited entry points, video surveillance of entrances when school is in session,<sup>4</sup> security film or ballistic windows on ground level windows, internal classroom door locks, bleed kits and first aid kits, exterior cameras on entrances, parking areas and campus grounds and fences around playgrounds.

Obviously, it is not possible for every charter school to comply with all of these requirements in one year. Some schools will have to make major changes to their physical plant, and those changes could take years. Thus, the legislation expects LEAs to seek alternatives. UAPCS expects the State Security Chief to grant many waiver applications, with preferences given to LEAs and schools that are obviously making best efforts to comply.

That said, these waivers do not apply to all elements of the bill. For example, every classroom must have a “wearable panic alert device” in each classroom. The only wiggle room there will be in what constitutes a “wearable” device. As the discussion with Rep. Wilcox and the State Security Chief have indicated, there may be a statewide contract for these devices; that remains to be seen.

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<sup>4</sup> These video cameras need to connect to local law enforcement.