

SCHOOL **MARSHAL** / **GUARDIAN** PROGRAMS

UPDATE AND REVIEW

HB3 – ARMED SECURITY OFFICER REQUIREMENT GOOD CAUSE EXCEPTION UPDATE

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OVERVIEW

Marshals have more rigorous, law enforcement-style training and state oversight, while **Guardians** offer faster, more flexible, local-level protection, with both aiming to stop active shooters.

Weapon Storage:

Marshal: Requires them to keep their weapon in a secure lockbox in their immediate vicinity, unless in an active threat situation.

Now as of HB 4007 and SB 870 amend the Texas Education Code to expand the rights of School Marshals (armed security personnel in education). School Marshals in Texas are allowed- and in some cases, encouraged- to wear uniforms that identify them as such. Uniformed School Marshals may openly carry their handguns on school premises.

Key details regarding uniformed School Marshals in Texas:

- **Identification:** Uniforms are used for visibility and as a deterrent to potential shooters.
- **Open Carry:** A School Marshal wearing a uniform that identifies them as a Marshal may openly carry a handgun.
- **Regulations:** The School District or Charter School must include specific written regulations regarding School Marshals and the requirements for carrying a handgun while in uniform.
- **Application:** These rules apply to public School Districts, open-enrollment charter schools, private schools, and public junior colleges.
- **Ammunition:** Handguns must be loaded with frangible duty ammunition approved by the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement.



OVERVIEW

Guardian: Generally allowed to carry their concealed weapon on their person at all times, providing immediate, “on-body” defense.

Funding:

Marshal: Previously supported by state grants, though funds can be limited, notes [The Houston Defender](#).

Guardian: Funded entirely by the local school district, according to [The Houston Defender](#).

Key Comparisons:

Marshal: Requires an intensive 80- hour training course, including psychological exams, approved by the [Texas Commission on Law Enforcement \(TCOLE\)](#).

Guardian: Requires a much shorter, local training, often around 15-20 hours, as determined by the school district board.

Summary of Differences:

Feature	School Marshal	Guardian Plan
Training Hours	80+ Hours (TCOLE)	-16-20 Hours
Weapon Location	Often Locked/Nearby	Carried on Person
Primary Oversight	TCOLE (State)	School Board (Local)

Over 100 School Districts, **Marshal** Program*
Over 300 School Districts, **Guardian** Program*



EXAMPLE OF MARSHAL PROGRAM

Plano ISD- Dallas-Fort Worth Metro Area (TEA 22-23 SY)

Total Schools: 82

Total Students: 48,752

Total Staff: 6,357

ISD Police Department: No

SRO / School Marshal reports to Chief of Safety & Security Operations

- Hired 55 new personnel for these positions
- Stricter requirements and training
- License and regulated by the state (TCOLE)
- Set hiring parameters (retired LE preferred, etc.)
- Would not need to be a year-round position
- Deployed at every elementary school
- DPS Firearm School Safety Course
- Alerrt Training
- Must possess LTC
- Must pass psychological
- Must complete school marshal course (80 hours)
- School marshal program is licensed and regulated through the state –TCOLE
- Must complete refresher training every two years



EXAMPLE OF GUARDIAN PROGRAM

Pasadena ISD- Houston Metro Area (TEA 22-23 SY)

Total Schools:67

Total Students:48,650

Total Staff:8,110

ISD Police Department: Yes / 1981

School Guardian Program

- **TCOLE / Agency Retired**
- **License to Carry**
- **DPS Firearm School Safety Course**
- **Alert Training**

Although the Guardians may be retired police officers, they are not serving in a police capacity. They are solely responsible for deterring, preventing, or ending a deadly force threat to a campus. They shall not be assigned any additional duties or responsibilities that conflict or detract from their ability to respond, at a moment's notice, to a deadly force threat. Guardians are not active-duty commissioned and shall not be called on for traffic issues, student issues, or any task that could affect their ability to respond to a threat of serious bodily injury or death to students or staff (Reference, Pasadena ISD Plan).



ALTERNATIVE STANDARD

The board of trustees of a school district that claims a good cause exception under Subsection (c) must develop an alternative standard with which the district can comply, which may include providing a person to act as a security officer who is:

1. A **School Marshal**; or
2. A **School Guardian** who is a school district employee or a person with whom the district contracts
 - Must have completed school safety training provided by a qualified handgun instructor certified in school safety under Section 411.1901, Government Code; and
 - Will carry a handgun on school premises in accordance with written regulations or written authorization of the district under Section 46.03(a)(1)(A), Penal Code.

The board of trustees of a school district must develop and maintain documentation of the district's implementation of and compliance with this section, including documentation related to a good cause exception claimed under Subsection (c), and shall, if requested by the agency, provide that documentation to the agency in the manner prescribed by the agency.



GOOD CAUSE EXCEPTION APPROVED

- c) If the board of trustees of a school district is unable to comply with this section, the board may claim a good cause exception from the requirement to comply with this section if the district's noncompliance is due to the availability of:
 - (1) funding; or
 - (2) personnel who qualify to serve as a security officer described by Subsection (a).
- (d) The board of trustees of a school district that claims a good cause exception under Subsection (c) must develop an alternative standard with which the district can comply, which may include providing a person to act as a security officer who is:
 - (1) a school marshal; or
 - (2) a school district employee or a person with whom the district contracts, who:
 - (A) has completed school safety training provided by a qualified handgun instructor certified in school safety under Section 411.1901, Government Code; and
 - (B) carries a handgun on school premises in accordance with written regulations or written authorization of the district under Section 46.03(a)(1)(A), Penal Code.

September 11, 2023, GCCISD Board of Trustees approved the Good Cause Exception for Armed Security Officers.



GCCISD POLICE/SECURITY PLAN

- Implement a transition plan to establish at least one police officer at each school. This would involve reducing the number of security officers at elementary schools as well as patrol officers assigned to cover elementary schools to accommodate adding police officers strategically, so that the 18 elementary campuses are covered.
- Provide training for selected security officers so that they are trained to carry a weapon. These security officers would receive the title of Level 3 Security Officers and would earn a stipend once the training has been completed.
- Consider other options currently available to the District, such as the Guardian Plan or Marshall Plan.
- During the transition, ensure police officers are present at campuses that are in proximity. For example, the police officer at Horace Mann Junior School will provide more visible presence and support at De Zavala Elementary due to proximity. The same structure will apply to Baytown Junior School and Travis Elementary; Hopper Primary and Highlands Elementary; and Banuelos Elementary and Victoria Walker Elementary.



GCCISD POLICE/SECURITY PLAN

CURRENT STAFFING	CURRENT OPENINGS
19 Full Time Police Officers	5 Full Time Police Officers
1 Part Time Police Officer	1 Part Time Police Officer
13 Armed Security Officers	5 Armed Security Officers
16 Unarmed Security Officers	2 Unarmed Security Officers

- Our goal is to meet the requirements of House Bill 3 that was effective September 1, 2023. HB 3 requires at least one-armed security officer- specifically, a commissioned peace officer – to be present during regular school hours at each campus.
- We will continue to ensure police officers are present on all campuses by performing random patrols of campuses that do not have a police officer or armed security officer assigned to them.



QUESTIONS?

