

SCHOOLS FACE RISING SECURITY COSTS

New law requires more personnel, other upgrades.



Student safety is a top priority for parents, educators, and legislators, and lawmakers have taken significant steps in recent years to make campuses more safe and secure. In 2023, the Legislature approved \$1.4 billion in new funding for student safety measures, including fencing and other barriers, film for exterior windows, cameras, new trainings for staff, and armed officers on campus.

The Legislature increased per-student funding for security from \$9.72 to \$10, plus an additional \$15,000 per campus. Those changes resulted in a \$20,000 increase for a campus of 500 students. This funding helped cover some — but not all — of the costs of the new safety requirements that legislators passed into law.

WHY DO SCHOOLS NEED ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR STUDENT SAFETY?

House Bill 3, which Governor Abbott signed into law in 2023, required that one armed security officer (a peace officer or school resource officer) is present during regular school hours on each campus. However, the additional state funding authorized by House Bill 3 did not meet the full cost of this new requirement for many school districts.

School districts are stretching every dollar further because the Legislature has not increased the Basic Allotment since 2019. Since that time, high inflation has driven up the cost of insurance, utilities, supplies, and other operational costs. In other words, the new safety requirements pull needed dollars away from other needs.

Educators will continue to prioritize the safety of students and others on campus. Legislators can support those efforts by increasing state funding for security. When deciding how to use the state's considerable surplus, legislators should prioritize additional funding for student safety.

In 2023, the Legislature increased the school safety allotment from **\$9.72** to **\$10** per student and added **\$15,000** per campus for security costs.

Current law provides **\$20,000 in safety funding** for a campus of 500 students — far less than an officer's compensation.

The Texas Comptroller estimates that the state will end the current budget year with a **\$24 billion surplus**, providing an opportunity to increase funding for targeted priorities.

Additional state investments can help create safer learning environments for Texas students.

