



## School Safety Funding - A Campus or ADA Funding Approach

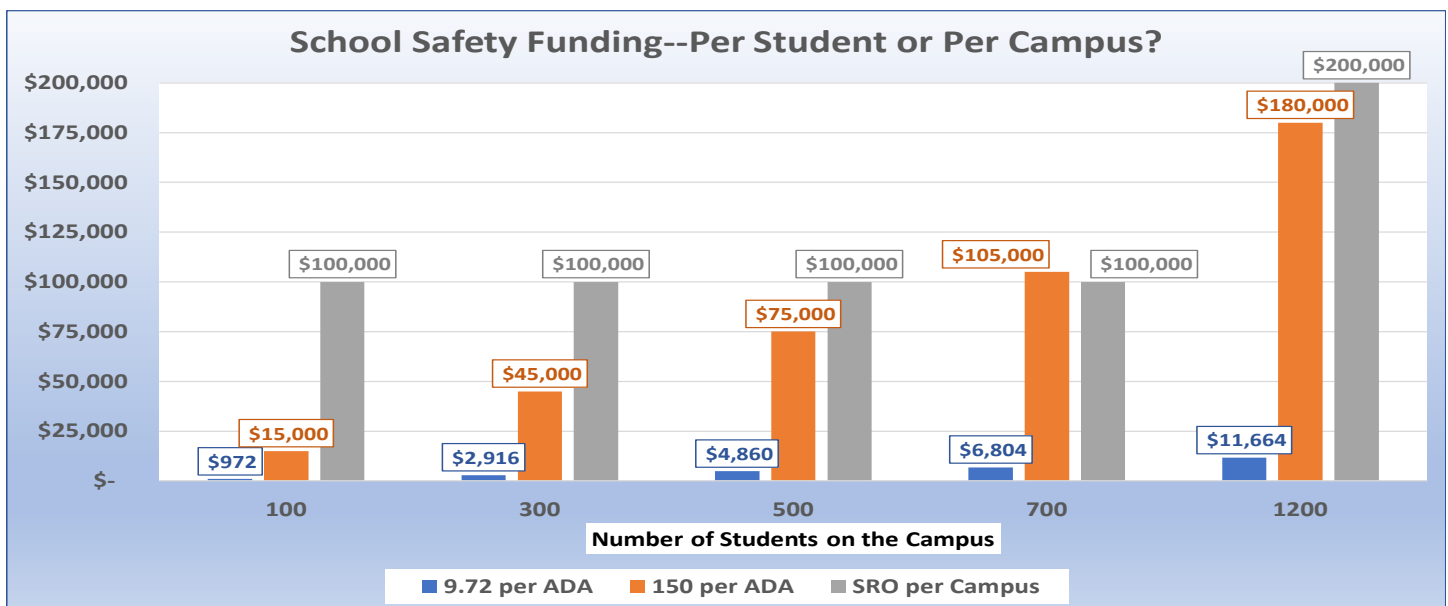
**#1. School safety is critical to having good schools.**

**#2. Truly Adequate funding for appropriate and effective school safety provisions is critical to good schools that are safe.**

There can be no question the current school safety allotment at \$9.72 per ADA (student in average daily attendance) **is not adequate**. A massive **increase in funding for school safety is required** if all school districts and campuses are going to accomplish this task. School safety funding should be enough to enable each school district and campus to achieve the desired safety goals without robbing funds from the base school finance formula designed to provide and meet instructional goals and needs. So, do we move to adequately fund school safety through a per campus amount? Or do we simply add funding to the current ADA funded school safety allotment?

We think **a new funding mechanism, based on per campus cost** makes more sense. Whether a campus has 250 students or 500 students, the cost of providing a security officer on that campus will be the same. And while a district may want the ability to decide some of these issues, if they do not have adequate funding to provide a security officer for each campus, then they really do not have the ability to choose that option.

The chart below uses 3 different illustrations to make the point. The vertical standard measures total dollars raised under each example. The horizontal standard shows relative campus sizes of 100, 300, 500, 700 and 1,200 students. The blue columns show funds generated under the current school safety allotment on each campus. The orange columns show funds generated on each campus if the current school safety allotment is increased to \$150 per ADA. The gray columns show the funding on each campus if our funding formula is based on campus funding of \$100 thousand for the purpose of covering salary, benefits, equipment and training of a security officer on each campus.



## Safety Funding - A Campus or ADA Funding Approach... cont'd

As is obvious on the chart, the model based on providing funding to provide a security officer **for each campus** comes much closer to making sure all campuses have adequate funding for what many consider the minimal level of security needed. Even at a funding level of \$150 per ADA, a district would need 700 or more students on each campus to reach that goal. If the allotment were set at \$100 dollars per ADA, reaching that goal would take 1,000 students per campus.

The chart below shows how many campuses across the state reach that milestone and the approximate statewide cost for each. Note that for campuses that have 1,200 or more students additional security personnel are added, providing another \$100,000 for staffing for each additional 1,200 students.

School Campuses in Texas—FY 22				
Campus Enrollment Range	Number of Campuses	% of Campuses Statewide	Base Cost	Additional Cost for Over 1,200 Students
1 - 699	6,078	72.80%	\$ 607,800,000	N/A
700 - 1199	1,586	19.00%	\$ 158,600,000	N/A
1200 - 2399	484	5.80%	\$ 48,400,000	\$ 48,400,000
2400 - 3599	176	2.11%	\$ 17,600,000	\$ 35,200,000
3600 - 4799	22	0.26%	\$ 2,200,000	\$ 6,600,000
4800 - 5999	1	0.01%	\$ 100,000	\$ 400,000
6000 - 7199	0	0.00%	\$ -	\$ -
7200 - 8399	1	0.01%	\$ 100,000	\$ 600,000
8400 - 9599	0	0.00%	\$ -	\$ -
9600 - 10199	1	0.01%	\$ 100,000	\$ 900,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,349</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>\$ 834,900,000</b>	<b>\$ 92,100,000</b>

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On this chart, note that nearly 73% of campuses across the state have less than 700 students. That means that under the current school safety allotment, ***even at an allotment of \$150 per ADA, up to 73% of the campuses in the state might not be able to fund a security officer for that campus.***

The bottom line is that if Texas is going to adequately and equitably provide for school safety for each child in the state, **we have to move to funding that recognizes the cost per campus**, not per ADA. We assign students to specific groups on specific campuses within a school district to provide their education. We provide security for that student by focusing on securing the campus assigned.

It is simply logical that we would provide adequate security funding in the way we deliver security -- campus by campus.

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# Closer Look - A District's Perspective on School Safety

*The following article was written by Dr. Jim Chadwell, Superintendent, Eagle Mountain-Saginaw ISD and Equity Center board member. We appreciate his thoughts and initiative to get out front and develop a plan to fully address the safety and security funding needs of all Texas districts.*

When I started my student teaching in the early 1990s in a Fort Worth area high school, I remember concerns stated by parents regarding a police car that was parked all day in front of the high school. It worried them that something was wrong. Fifteen years later I returned to the same school district as a district administrator and fielded a phone call from an upset parent. They questioned, "why is there no police car in front of the school? I heard you have removed the student resource officer program." We had not.

So much has changed in a very short period of time. The expectations for safety and security have evolved from schools designed on an open campus format to controlled vestibules. A few cameras at the entry doors have grown to hundreds with complex command centers for safety and security staff to monitor doors and cameras. In the face of all of this, what has not changed is the provision of appropriate funding by the State to address these needs and expectations. With every security improvement, we have pulled from the same pot of money...the same funding meant for the teaching and learning.

As district leaders, we balance these needs to the greatest extent possible so that we can protect our students and staff and also provide for strong academic environments. We apply for grants, we secure donations, we include safety improvements in bond programs, we reduce costs in other areas, we stretch the funding to the greatest extent possible.

There is no doubt that this affects the funding available for teaching and learning, but we make these choices for the safety and protection of our school community. The State Legislature implemented the safety and security allotment, which certainly is appreciated. However, it only covers a fraction of the overall need. In most school districts, the allocation barely covers the cost of compensating an individual to handle the

important duties of focusing on school safety and security, much less the cost of implementing any processes or installing equipment.

The financial challenge occurs when funding is distributed on a simple, dollars-per-student (ADA) basis. Smaller campuses and districts are unable to make meaningful investments to address the actual needs. This is one problem with funding provided through the school finance formula. Furthermore, allocations such as the Safety and Security allotment may be reduced by other state aid provisions and with changes from year-to-year. The TEA may create eligibility standards that may make it fluctuate like the fast growth school's allotment, or in some cases the budget is prorated and we only receive a portion of what was expected.

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As the main driver of the school finance formula, student enrollment and average daily attendance fluctuate too much for an expenditure that is driven more by the number of secured campuses. The state funding formula does not take the number of campuses into account in distributing funds. It is for these reasons and so many more that any substantive and dependable funding for safety and security should be provided outside of the school finance formula.

There are many expenditures identified for safety and security, but the most significant budget item is for police officers. Although having at least one police officer in every school in the state would be the gold standard, there is simply not enough funding for this to be done in all school districts. In addition, it must be acknowledged that not all districts have this as a goal and that is a choice each school district needs to make for its specific community. But for the many districts that do desire to have a minimum of one officer per school, there is no financial pathway to achieve this within the current funding formula. Many of the districts that have accomplished this have done so with financial assistance by the municipality that serves their schools.

The challenge moving forward is how to fund this on a statewide basis. As we considered the available options, we based the funding recommendation on providing funding for one or more police officers in every school in the state. A school with less than 1,200 students would have one officer funded. For every additional

# A District’s Perspective on School Safety..continued

1,200 students thereafter, an additional officer would be funded.

For example, a school with 1,500 students would have two officers funded and a school with 2,500 would have three. There are approximately 9,100 schools in Texas and approximately 11,000 officers would need to be funded for these schools. Recognizing the fixed costs that every school district, regardless of size, would entail in providing a coordinated, cohesive safety program, each district should receive a minimum base allocation of \$200,000 for the necessary administrative and dispatch personnel. Considering the district base allocation and \$100,000 as the budget line item for the campus officer positions and associated expenses, there would be an approximate \$1.4 billion annual impact to the State. A funding comparison of various size school districts is included below.

municipality. If the municipality does not have an SRO program, then no funding would be distributed. The funding is strictly for the salaries of officers and, similar to SHARS funding for which school districts may apply, there is no funding without a provision of service. In this case, the service is a police officer. In addition, this provides the school district the first right of refusal for the funding. The district is not required to have a police department or an SRO program. Flexibility remains at the local level. The main difference is that the districts that would like to have officers in their schools have the financial ability to achieve this without negatively affecting the other areas of their budget.

Without substantive funding outside of the school finance formula, the likelihood is low to support the need by districts and, in some cases, the expectation of their community, to have an officer in each of their schools. There are undoubtedly concerns that the pool of available officers in the state is not large enough to meet the demand. While this may be the case in some areas, it is not the reality for all. There are 311 school districts in the state with their own police departments. Most of these are fully staffed.

A common background of many of these officers are those who have retired from city or state law enforcement, but have continued to work post-retirement. They come to the schools with many years of specialized training and leadership experiences. In addition, there is a growing group of police officers who wish to specialize in school law enforcement. The role of the student resource officer has grown and ISD police departments are dynamic organizations that include the ability to address potential threats.

	Current Safety and Security Allotment (\$9.72 per ADA)	Hypothetical Safety and Security Allotment funded at \$100 per ADA	School Officer Program funded at \$100,000 per Officer, plus base allotment (outside of the school finance formula)
District A: Small ADA: 750 Campuses: 3 Number of SRO's: 3	\$7,290	\$75,000	\$500,000
District B: Medium ADA: 10,000 Number of Campuses: 8 Number of SRO's: 10	\$97,200	\$1,000,000	\$1,200,000
District C: Large ADA: 50,000 Number of Campuses: 65 Number of SRO's: 75	\$486,000	\$5,000,000	\$7,700,000

To protect the funding source for these officers from the negative effects of the school finance formula, we recommend that these funds be provided outside of the school finance formula and be a part of the general state budget. The funds would flow to the entity providing officers for the schools.

For example, if there is a school district police department, the funding would be provided to the ISD police department. If the school district does not have a police department, the funding would flow to the county. If the county does not have a school resource officer (SRO) program, the funding would flow to the

Just as we can look back and remember how uncommon it was for police to be working in schools, the future will only result in a more involved presence of peace officers on a daily basis in our schools. In the spirit of community policing that encourages the police to build proactive relationships within their communities, building those ties at the youngest levels only helps to make our schools safer and better environments for student learning, and fosters healthy relationships with law enforcement as these students grow into adults.

(continued on following page)

## A District's Perspective on School Safety...continued

During this upcoming legislative session, there will likely be several options promoted to fund safety and security to a greater extent. There is a desire by many elected officials to make a substantive impact on school safety and we have the opportunity to leverage this desire to have significant and long-lasting funding solutions for safety and security.

The need for greater student resource officers in our schools will only grow. And there may be a time in the not-too-distant future, in which it is simply the expected norm. The question today; however, does it become a reality at the expense of teaching and learning?

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# State School Safety Funding

As we continue our focus on school safety, and our work to ensure that the state of Texas provides every school district in the state with the resources necessary to maintain safe learning environments, below we take a look at the recent history of school safety funding, as well as the most recent developments.

In response to the Santa Fe school shooting in 2018, Governor Greg Abbott announced a School and Firearm Safety Action Plan, which included approximately \$110 million in total statewide funding. The plan called for an increase in law enforcement presence at schools, school marshal training, active shooter drills, hardening of campus facilities, as well as enhanced mental health programs.

The Texas Legislature followed in 2019 by creating the School Safety and Security Grant, funded by a one-time \$100 million appropriation, with grant application awards based on school district size. The end date for the grant is June 15, 2023. Each district can find their eligible award amounts here (2019-2021 School Safety and Security Grant Eligible Applicants Funding Amounts): [Eligible Applicant Funding \(state.tx.us\)](https://www.state.tx.us).<sup>1</sup>

Also included in the 2019 legislative reforms was the creation of the School Safety Allotment, funded at \$50 million per year, and distributed on an ADA (students in average daily attendance) basis, it resulted in an allotment of \$9.72 per student. The 2021 legislature continued this funding amount for the 2022-23 biennium.

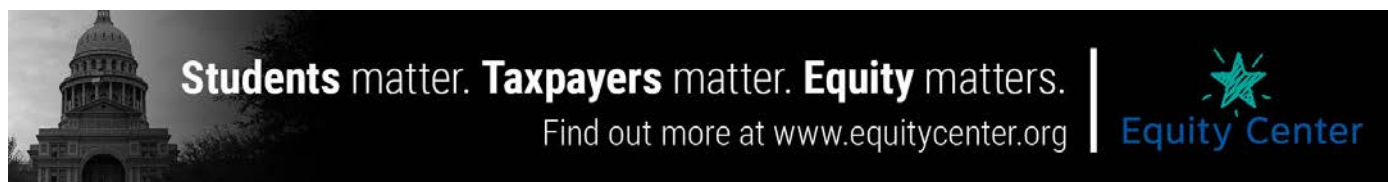
Responding to the 2022 school shooting in Uvalde ISD, special committees were charged in the Texas House and Senate with studying and making recommendations to the 88th Legislature, including the Select Committee to Protect All Texans, and the Youth Health and Safety Select Committee. The committees' official recommendations have not been released at this time.

In June of this year, Governor Abbott, Lt. Governor Dan Patrick, and Speaker Dade Phelan announced over \$100 million in additional state funds targeted at improving school safety. Of the \$100 million: \$50 million is dedicated for purchasing bullet-resistant shields, \$17 million is allocated for silent panic alert technology, and more than \$10 million is directed toward mental health-related programs.

On October 3rd, Governor Abbott announced the hiring of John P. Scott as the new Chief of School Safety and Security to lead the newly created School Safety department within TEA.

Last month the Texas Education Agency released their Legislative Appropriations Request (LAR) for the next two-year biennium. In the LAR is an exceptional items request regarding school safety that states, "While still in the planning phase, that exceptional item request will include funding for facilities upgrades, school-based safety personnel, technical assistance and other supports..." This request is promising, and is similar to the school safety allotment funding changes the Equity Center is working to have the legislature enact.

<sup>1</sup> (Note: If your district has not filed for your grant, you should file. Even though it may not represent a lot of funding for your district, it is important that districts use all available resources to date to verify need.)



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