

# FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

## FINAL BILL ANALYSIS

*This bill analysis was prepared by nonpartisan committee staff and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.*

**BILL #:** [CS/CS/CS/HB 1403](#)

**TITLE:** Safety of Students

**SPONSOR(S):** Yeager, Hunschofsky

**COMPANION BILL:** [CS/SB 1470](#) (Burgess)

**LINKED BILLS:** None

**RELATED BILLS:** None

**FINAL HOUSE FLOOR ACTION:** 110 Y's

0 N's

**GOVERNOR'S ACTION:** Approved

### SUMMARY

#### Effect of the Bill:

The bill authorizes Florida's licensed child care facilities to participate in the Chris Hixon, Coach Aaron Feis, and Coach Scott Beigel School Guardian Program and authorizes child care facilities to employ school security guards. The training, certification, and reporting requirements for school security guards is aligned with the existing requirements for school guardians. The Department of Education must convene a workgroup to explore the establishment of a Florida Institute of School Safety and, subject to appropriation, must identify a centralized system for use by all public safety answering point infrastructure which can receive alerts from all panic alert systems and integrate digital maps used by public schools, charter schools, and other educational institutions.

The requirements regarding school perimeter and door security measures are updated and clarified to address concerns raised by stakeholders during implementation of the requirements passed during the 2024 Legislative session. Additionally, career and technical education classrooms are exempted from door security requirements in specified circumstances. Each substitute teacher must be provided all school safety protocols and procedures prior to his or her first day of substitute teaching.

#### Fiscal or Economic Impact:

The bill may have a fiscal impact to the private sector, in particular child care centers.

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## ANALYSIS

### EFFECT OF THE BILL:

CS/CS/CS/HB 1403 passed as [CS/SB 1470](#).

The bill adds Florida's licensed [child care facilities](#) to the list of entities authorized to participate in the [Chris Hixon, Coach Aaron Feis, and Coach Scott Beigel School Guardian Program](#) (Guardian Program). As with other entities that participate in the guardian program, child care facilities that elect to participate are required to verify that guardians meet the statutory requirements as well as report guardian information to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE). Child care facilities, in counties where the sheriff does not operate a Guardian Program, may have their guardians trained in another county. Additionally, a child care facility that establishes a guardian program must pay for the full cost of implementing such a program, but sheriffs may waive the costs of providing guardian training for child care facility guardians. (Sections [1](#) and [2](#)).

Several provisions related to [school security guards](#) are amended, including:

- Authorizing child care facilities to employ school security guards.
- Aligning the training and certification requirements for school security guards with the existing requirements for school guardians.
- Requiring a security agency who employs school security guards to pay for all training and screening-related costs for such school security guards. However, such costs, beginning January 1, 2026, cannot exceed the actual costs incurred by the sheriff to provide the training.

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- Prohibiting a sheriff from waiving training and screening-related costs for the initial training or ongoing training of a school security guard.
- Requiring a sheriff to certify all school security guards, and requiring the sheriff to maintain specified training records for each school security guard that he or she certifies.
- Requiring a sheriff to approve a school security guard to work in a county prior to his or employment as a school security guard in that county.
- Requiring that a school or child care facility that employs a school security guard, as well as the school security guard's employing agency, to report specified information to FDLE and requiring FDLE to maintain a list of all persons who are certified as a school security guard.
- Requiring a sheriff to report upcoming school security guard trainings to FDLE.
- Prohibiting a school or child care facility, or an employing security agency, from employing school security guards if specified information is not reported to FDLE. (Sections [1](#), [2](#), and [5](#)).

The bill also clarifies requirements regarding [school perimeter and door security measures](#) implemented by the Legislature in 2024. The school perimeter and door security measure requirements established in 2024 must be enforced at a minimum 30 minutes before and after the school day. School perimeter security requirements are limited to the exclusive zone<sup>1</sup> and any part of campus in a non-exclusive zone<sup>2</sup> are expressly excluded from perimeter security requirements. Doors to school buildings may remain unlocked if actively staffed, similar to current law for campus access points. Additionally, common areas, such as cafeterias, auditoriums, and media centers must comply with the school perimeter and door security measure only when such spaces are being used for instructional time or student testing.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) classrooms that require open doors for health and safety reasons are exempt from the door security measures so long as the health and safety reasons are documented and locked doors separate the CTE classroom from other student occupied spaces. (Section [4](#)).

Subject to an appropriation, the Department of Education (DOE), in cooperation with the Department of Management Services, must identify a centralized system for use by all public safety answering point infrastructure which can receive alerts from all panic alert systems and integrate digital maps used by public schools, charter schools, and other educational institutions. The centralized system must:

- Receive alerts, location information, and relevant data from all department-approved panic alert systems.
- Integrate and display digital school maps to provide real-time situational awareness to law enforcement and emergency responders.
- Retain and provide access to historical alert data for use by authorized state agencies.

If the DOE identifies an appropriate centralized system, each public school and charter school shall confirm with the district school board that the school's respective panic alert system is connected to the centralized system. Digital maps of school campuses must also be integrated with the centralized system to support emergency response.

School are authorized to use temporary door locks, in addition to regular permanent door locks, during active assailant incidents. Any such temporary lock must be able to be engaged or removed without opening the door; must be easily removed in a single operation from the egress side of the door without the use of a key and from the ingress side of the door with the use of a key or other credential; may be installed at any height; must otherwise comply with the Florida Fire Prevention Code; and must be integrated into the active assailant response plan. Each substitute teacher must be provided all school safety protocols and procedures prior to his or her first day of substitute teaching. (Section [4](#)).

Obsolete language related to a requirement for sheriffs, school districts, charter schools, and private schools to report specified information to FDLE by September 1, 2024, about each person who is certified under the Guardian Program and who has been appointed as a guardian, is removed. Since that date has already passed, the

<sup>1</sup> An "exclusive zone" is the area within a gate or door allowing access to the interior perimeter of a school campus beyond a single point of entry.

<sup>2</sup> A "non-exclusive zone" is the area outside of the exclusive zone but contained on school property.

requirement is now obsolete. Sheriffs and the specified schools are still required to report such information to FDLE on an ongoing basis. (Section [1](#)).

The DOE must convene a workgroup of stakeholders, including, but not limited to, postsecondary institutions, law enforcement, fire and EMS, emergency management, school facilities staff, school safety specialists, school administrators, superintendents, school-based mental health professionals, and threat management practitioners. The workgroup shall make recommendations for the establishment of a Florida Institute of School Safety, including programs and functions to enhance school safety. The workgroup shall submit the findings and recommendations to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives no later than January 1, 2026. (Section [3](#)).

The bill was approved by the Governor on May 21, 2025, ch. 2025-58, L.O.F., and will become effective on July 1, 2025. (Section [6](#)).

## **FISCAL OR ECONOMIC IMPACT:**

### **PRIVATE SECTOR:**

The bill authorizes licensed child care facilities to participate in the Chris Hixon, Coach Aaron Feis, and Coach Scott Beigel School Guardian Program and authorizes child care facilities to employ school security guards. Because it is undetermined how many of the over 8,000 licensed child care centers in Florida may opt to employ a school security guard or guardians, there may be a fiscal impact to the private sector if costs for child care services are increased as a result of the child care center contracting for a school security guardian.

## **RELEVANT INFORMATION**

### **SUBJECT OVERVIEW:**

#### **[Chris Hixon, Coach Aaron Feis, and Coach Scott Beigel School Guardian Program](#)**

The Guardian Program authorizes qualified school personnel to serve as an armed guard to aid in the prevention or abatement of active assailant incidents on school premises.<sup>3</sup> A school district or charter school employee may serve as a guardian if the individual is appointed by the district school superintendent or charter school principal and is certified by a sheriff. The individual must also satisfy the following requirements:

- hold a concealed weapons license;
- pass a psychological evaluation administered by a licensed psychologist;
- pass an initial drug test and subsequent random drug tests;
- successfully complete a 144-hour training program<sup>4</sup> that includes:
  - at least 12 hours of training to improve the school guardian's knowledge and skills necessary to respond to and de-escalate incidents on school premises; and
  - 132 total hours of specified, comprehensive firearm safety and proficiency training conducted by Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission-certified instructors, and ongoing training, weapon inspection, and firearm qualification on at least an annual basis.<sup>5</sup>

An individual must satisfy the background screening, psychological evaluation, and drug testing requirements prior to participating in the required guardian training. All training for the guardian program must be conducted by a sheriff.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Section [30.15\(1\)\(k\), F.S.](#)

<sup>4</sup> This is the standardized training requirement for the state. A sheriff may provide additional training but cannot require an individual who has completed the standard training to undergo additional training unless they have not served as a school guardian for over a year. Section [30.15\(1\)\(k\)1.d., F.S.](#)

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

<sup>6</sup> Section [1006.12\(7\), F.S.](#)

The sheriff conducting the training for school district and charter school employees will be reimbursed for screening-related and training-related costs and for providing a one-time stipend of \$500 to each school guardian who participates in the school guardian program.<sup>7</sup>

An individual certified under, and in good standing with, the Florida Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission, and who is otherwise qualified to serve as a guardian, is exempt from the 144-hour training requirement prior to certification as a guardian.<sup>8</sup>

A county sheriff must establish a program if the district school board elects to participate. The sheriff may contract with another county sheriff who has already established a program to provide training. Charter school governing boards may directly request guardian training from the county sheriff even if the school district decides not to participate. Should the sheriff deny the request, the charter school may contract with a county sheriff who is willing to provide the training.<sup>9</sup> A sheriff who establishes a program may consult with the FDLE on programmatic guiding principles, practices, and resources.<sup>10</sup>

A school guardian has no authority to act in any law enforcement capacity except to the extent necessary to prevent or abate an active assailant incident on school premises. The sheriff who conducts the guardian training must issue a school guardian certificate to individuals who meet these requirements and maintain documentation of weapon and equipment inspections, as well as the training, certification, inspection, and qualification records of each school guardian certified by the sheriff.<sup>11</sup>

### **Private School Participation in the Guardian Program**

In 2023, the Legislature authorized private schools to partner with a law enforcement or security agency to establish or assign a safe-school officer to their schools. The private school is responsible for any costs associated with implementing a safe-school officer, including training under the Guardian Program. A private school electing to establish a safe-school officer must comply with the same statutory requirements for these officers as school districts and charter schools.<sup>12</sup>

If the county in which a private school operates does not currently participate in the Guardian Program, the private school may request their local sheriff to initiate a Guardian Program for the purpose of training private school employees. If the local sheriff declines, the private school may contract with a sheriff of a county that has implemented a Guardian Program to provide the necessary training. The private school is responsible for notifying the local sheriff prior to entering into such a contract and is responsible for all costs associated with the training of private school employees to serve as guardians. The sheriff providing guardian training to private school employees is prohibited from comingling funds received for such training with funds received from the state for the purposes of training school district or charter school employees to serve as guardians.<sup>13</sup>

While the private school is responsible for all costs associated with its participation in the Guardian Program, a sheriff may waive training and background screening costs for a private school participating in the school guardian program. Funds provided to the sheriff by the DOE for the school guardian program may not be used to subsidize any costs that have been waived by the sheriff.<sup>14</sup>

### **Reporting Requirements for the Guardian Program**

In 2024, the Legislature implemented new reporting requirements related to individuals certified as school guardians and serving as school guardians in school districts, charter schools, and private schools. The FDLE serves as the central repository of information regarding certified and appointed school guardians.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Section [30.15\(1\)\(k\)1.e., F.S.](#)

<sup>8</sup> Section [30.15\(1\)\(k\)1.g., F.S.](#)

<sup>9</sup> Section [30.15\(1\)\(k\), F.S.](#)

<sup>10</sup> Section [943.03\(16\), F.S.](#)

<sup>11</sup> Section [30.15\(1\)\(k\), F.S.](#)

<sup>12</sup> Section [1002.42\(20\), F.S.](#)

<sup>13</sup> Section [30.15\(1\)\(k\)1.c., F.S.](#)

<sup>14</sup> Section [30.15\(1\)\(k\)1.f., F.S.](#)

<sup>15</sup> Section [30.15\(1\)\(k\)3., F.S.](#)

Each sheriff must report to the FDLE, within 30 days of such certification, each individual certified as a school guardian. Each sheriff must also make a one-time report, by September 1, 2024, of every individual previously certified as a school guardian by the sheriff. The required reports must include the name, date of birth, and certification date of the guardian.<sup>16</sup>

Additionally, each school district, charter school, and private school participating in the guardian program must report to the FDLE, each February 1 and September 1, the name, date of birth, and appointment date of each individual appointed as a school guardian. The school district, charter school, and private school must also report the end date of any appointment as a school guardian. Each participating school must make a one-time report to the FDLE, by September 1, 2024, providing a current list of appointed school guardians that includes, name, date of birth, and initial and end-of-appointment date of each school guardian, as applicable.<sup>17</sup>

Using the information from these reports, the FDLE must maintain a list of all individuals appointed as school guardians that includes name, certification date, date of appointment, including the name of the school, information reported by the DOE related to a school guardian discharging their firearms or being subject to discipline, and end date of appointment, if applicable. The FDLE must remove anyone from the list whose required guardian training has expired.<sup>18</sup>

Each sheriff must report to the FDLE, on a quarterly basis, the schedule for upcoming guardian trainings, including the dates, locations, contact person for registration, and class capacity. The FDLE is required to publish, and update quarterly, the information related to such trainings on its website.<sup>19</sup>

For any sheriff that fails to comply with the above reporting requirements, the sheriff is prohibited from receiving reimbursements from the DOE for costs associated with the school guardian program. For any school district, charter school, or private school that fails to comply with the above reporting requirements, the entity is prohibited from operating a school guardian program the following school year, unless the school district, charter school, or private school has submitted the required information. Such prohibition is lifted as soon as the sheriff, school district, charter school, or private school complies with reporting requirements. In order for the DOE to be able to enforce these prohibitions, the FDLE is required to report any non-compliance to the DOE each year by March 1 and October 1.<sup>20</sup>

Each school district, charter school, or private school, before employing an individual as a school guardian, must contact the FLDE and review all information maintained by the FDLE related to the individual's school guardian certification and employment as a school guardian.<sup>21</sup>

### **School Security Guards**

In addition to the Guardian Program, a school district, charter school governing board, or private school may contract with a security agency to employ a school security guard.<sup>22</sup> A school security guard is an individual who is employed by a security agency and serves on a school facility as a safe-school officer in support of school sanctioned activities.<sup>23</sup> Security guards are required to hold a concealed carry weapon permit and undergo drug testing and a psychological evaluation.<sup>24</sup> An individual serving in this capacity must complete guardian program

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<sup>16</sup> Section [30.15\(1\)\(k\)3.a., F.S.](#)

<sup>17</sup> Section [30.15\(1\)\(k\)3.b., F.S.](#)

<sup>18</sup> Section [30.15\(1\)\(k\)3.c., F.S.](#)

<sup>19</sup> Section [30.15\(1\)\(k\)3.d., F.S.](#)

<sup>20</sup> Section [30.15\(1\)\(k\)3.e.-g., F.S.](#)

<sup>21</sup> Section [1006.12\(3\)\(b\), F.S.](#)

<sup>22</sup> Section [1006.12\(4\), F.S.](#)

<sup>23</sup> Section [1006.12\(4\), F.S.](#)

<sup>24</sup> Section [1006.12\(4\)\(a\), F.S.](#)



training, including 144 training hours.<sup>25</sup> A security guard must aid in the prevention or abatement of active assailant incidents on school premises,<sup>26</sup> but does not have arrest powers.<sup>27</sup>

A school district contract with a security agency must define the entity or entities responsible for training and the responsibilities for maintaining records relating to training, inspection, and firearm qualification.<sup>28</sup>

### Child Care Facilities

The child-care licensing program is a component of the services provided by Department of Children and Families (DCF). The program is accountable for the statewide licensure of Florida's child-care facilities, specialized child-care facilities for the care of mildly ill children, large family child-care homes, and licensure or registration of family day care homes. The purpose of the program is to ensure a healthy and safe environment for the children in child-care settings and to improve the quality of their care through regulation and consultation. DCF ensures that licensing requirements are met through on-going inspections of child-care facilities and homes, thus preventing the continued operation of substandard child-care programs.<sup>29</sup> There are over 8,000 licensed child care programs in Florida.<sup>30</sup>

Florida's child-care laws<sup>31</sup> define "child care facility" to mean any child care center or child care arrangement which provides child care for more than five children unrelated to the operator and which receives a payment, fee, or grant for any of the children receiving care, wherever operated, and whether or not operated for profit. The following are not included:

- Public schools and nonpublic schools;
- Summer camps having children in full-time residence;
- Summer day camps;
- Bible schools normally conducted during vacation periods; and
- Operators of transient establishments which provide child care services solely for the guests of their establishment or resort, provided that all child care personnel are background screened.<sup>32</sup>

### School Perimeter and Door Security Measures

In 2024, the Legislature established new perimeter and door safety requirements that school districts and charter school governing boards must comply with by August 1, 2024.<sup>33</sup> The law requires compliance with the following:<sup>34</sup>

- All gates or other access points that restrict ingress to or egress from a school campus must remain closed and locked when students are on campus. A gate or access point may not be open or unlocked, regardless of whether it is during normal school hours, unless the:
  - gate or access point is attended or actively staffed by a person when students are on campus;
  - use of the school campus is in accordance with a shared use agreement; or
  - school safety specialist, or his or her designee, has documented in the Florida Safe Schools Assessment Tool portal maintained by the Office of Safe Schools (OSS) that the gate or access point is not subject to this requirement based upon other safety measures at the school.
- All school classrooms and other instructional spaces must be locked to prevent ingress when occupied by students, except between class periods when students are moving between classrooms or other instructional spaces.

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<sup>25</sup> *Id.*

<sup>26</sup> Section [1006.12\(4\)\(c\), F.S.](#)

<sup>27</sup> Section [30.15\(1\)\(k\), F.S.](#)

<sup>28</sup> Section [1006.12\(4\)\(b\), F.S.](#)

<sup>29</sup> Florida Department of Children and Families, *About Child Care Licensure*, <https://www.myflfamilies.com/services/child-family/child-care/child-care-providers-and-staff/about-child-care-licensure> (last visited May 5, 2025).

<sup>30</sup> Florida Department of Children and Families, *Child Care Provider List, 3-1-2023*, available at <https://www.myflfamilies.com/sites/default/files/2023-03/Public%20-%202023-3-1%20-%20Statewide.pdf> (last visited May 5, 2025).

<sup>31</sup> Section [402.301-319, F.S.](#)

<sup>32</sup> Section [402.302\(2\), F.S.](#)

<sup>33</sup> Section [1006.07\(6\)\(f\)1, F.S.](#)

<sup>34</sup> Section [1001.212\(6\)\(f\)1-3, F.S.](#)

- All campus access doors, gates, and other access points that allow ingress to or egress from a school building shall remain closed and locked at all times to prevent ingress, unless a person is actively entering or exiting the door, gate, or other access point. The school safety specialist, or his or her designee, may document in the Florida Safe Schools Assessment Tool portal maintained by the OSS that the gate or other access point is not subject to this requirement based upon other safety measures at the school. The OSS may conduct a compliance visit to review if such determination is appropriate. All campus access doors, gates, and other access points may be electronically or manually controlled by school personnel to allow access by authorized visitors, students, and school personnel.

In relation to the locking of doors and access points, any time a door or access point is left open or unlocked it must be actively staffed by a person standing or seated at the door, except where a school safety specialist has determined and documented in the Florida Safe Schools Assessment Tool portal that these requirements do not apply.<sup>35</sup>

Additionally, all school classrooms and other instructional spaces must clearly and conspicuously mark the safest areas in each classroom or other instructional space where students must shelter in place during an emergency. Students must be notified of these safe areas within the first 10 days of the school year. If it is not feasible to clearly and conspicuously mark the safest areas in a classroom or other instructional space, the school safety specialist, or his or her designee, must document such determination in the Florida Safe Schools Assessment Tool portal identifying where affected students must shelter in place. The OSS shall conduct a compliance inspection of this requirement during each triennial inspection.<sup>36</sup>

Any person who becomes aware of a violation of these requirements must report the violation to the school principal. The school principal must report the violation to the school safety specialist no later than the next business day after receiving such report. If the school principal or charter school administrator allegedly violated these requirements, then the report must be made directly to the district school superintendent or charter school governing board, as applicable.<sup>37</sup>

The OSS must annually notify all administrative and instructional personnel by electronic mail of the perimeter and door safety requirements.<sup>38</sup> The OSS must refer any instructional or administrative personnel that knowingly violated the perimeter and door safety requirements to the district school superintendent or charter school administrator for disciplinary action. The superintendent or charter school administrator must notify the OSS of the outcome of the disciplinary proceeding within three school days of the conclusion of the proceedings.<sup>39</sup>

District school boards and charter school governing boards must adopt a progressive discipline policy for addressing any instructional personnel and any administrative personnel who knowingly violate school safety requirements.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>35</sup> *Id.*

<sup>36</sup> Section [1006.07\(6\)\(f\), F.S.](#)

<sup>37</sup> Section [1006.07\(6\)\(f\), F.S.](#)

<sup>38</sup> Section [1001.212\(16\), F.S.](#)

<sup>39</sup> Section [1001.212\(13\)\(e\), F.S.](#)

<sup>40</sup> Section [1006.07\(6\)\(g\), F.S.](#)

**RECENT LEGISLATION:**

YEAR	BILL #	HOUSE SPONSOR(S)	SENATE SPONSOR	OTHER INFORMATION
2024	<a href="#">CS/CS/HB 1473</a>	Trabulsy, Hunschofsky	Calatayud	Became law on July 1, 2024.
2023	<a href="#">CS/HB 543</a>	Brannan, Payne	Collins	Became law on July 1, 2023.
2022	<a href="#">CS/CS/CS/HB 1421</a>	Hawkins, Hunschofsky	Gruters	Became law on July 1, 2022.