

Armed Personnel in Schools (Note)

The December 2012 shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newton, Connecticut, sparked a reevaluation of school security and the safety of both students and staff. One issue that emerged was whether certain adults should be allowed to possess weapons within school buildings to deter and defend against armed intruders.

South Dakota 2013 S.D. Session Laws ch. 93 (S.D. [HB 1087](#)) authorizes any school board, upon approval of the law enforcement official who has jurisdiction over school premises, to create, establish, and supervise the arming of school employees, hired security personnel, or volunteers as school sentinels to deter physical threats and defend schools, students, staff, and members of the public on school premises against violent attack. School sentinels are required to successfully complete training with the Law Enforcement Officers Standards Commission. A school board may refer the decision of whether to implement a school sentinel program to a vote of the qualified voters of the school district.

Kansas 2013 Kan. Sess. Laws ch. 105 (Kan. [HB 2052](#)) authorizes public schools and colleges, beginning in July 2013, to allow employees and visitors who are otherwise permitted to carry a concealed handgun to carry the concealed handgun in any building of the institution if the school district or the governing body of the institution does not have a policy otherwise prohibiting it. No additional training is required to carry the weapon than is already required to obtain a concealed carry permit under Kansas law.

Tennessee 2013 Tenn. Pub. Acts ch. 358 (Tenn. [HB 6](#)) authorizes any person employed or assigned to a local education agency to possess and carry a firearm on school grounds if the person possesses a permit to carry, has the joint written permission of the director of schools and the principal of the school, and is a current or former law enforcement officer who has completed 40 hours of basic training in school policing.

Georgia 2014 Ga. Laws Act 604 (Ga. [HB 60](#)) authorizes local boards of education to adopt a policy to allow persons to possess or use weapons on school property when authorized in writing by an official of the school.

Missouri 2014 Mo. Laws (Mo. [SB 656](#)) authorizes any school district within the state, after a public hearing on the matter, to designate elementary or secondary school teachers or administrators as school protection officers. School protection officers are authorized to carry concealed firearms or self-defense spray in any school in the district. Volunteers who seek to be designated as school protection officers must submit a written request to the local superintendent of education and, to be allowed to carry a concealed weapon, must also submit proof of a valid concealed carry permit and a certificate of completion of a school protection officer training program. Identifying information about each person designated as a school protection officer shall be provided to the department of public safety and the department shall make a list of all school protection officers available to all law enforcement agencies.

Texas 2013 Tex. Gen. Laws ch. 655 (Tex. [HB 1009](#)) authorizes local boards of education to designate school employees as school marshals who may only act as necessary to prevent or abate the commission of an offense that threatens serious bodily injury or death of students, faculty, or visitors on school premises. Before appointment, school marshals shall successfully complete an 80 hour training program specific to school safety and shall obtain a license to carry a concealed handgun under state law. The applicant shall also be determined to be psychologically fit to carry on the duties of a school marshal by completing a psychological evaluation. A school marshal license is effective for two years and may be renewed only upon successfully completing a renewal training course and examination on the materials and demonstrating handgun proficiency and psychological fitness. Identifying information about each person licensed as a school marshal shall be provided to the department of public safety, the employing school district, the chief law enforcement officer of the municipality or sheriff of the county, and the chief administrator of any commissioned peace officer that is employed at the school.