



School Security Officer Initiative

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What prompted CEC's Governing Board to consider and approve armed School Security Officers in CEC schools?

The CEC Governing Board is committed to prioritizing the safety and security of all CEC staff and students. The Board is aware that incidents of violence and threats targeting educational institutions have increased 69% from 2018-2019 to 2022-23 nationwide.

The Board is also aware that CEC has seen an uptick in behaviors around some of our campuses by community members that involve criminal activities. Most recently, there was an escalated police incident at a business located across the street from one of our campuses.

In addition, CEC, as well as other state-chartered schools, have been unsuccessful in securing contracts for School Resource Officers with local police departments

The Board believes that having armed School Security Officers (SSOs) in CEC schools is a proactive approach that will provide the next level of safety and security for staff and students, particularly in bridging the time gap between when police are called and their arrival.

What are the responsibilities of SSOs?

The presence of SSOs is to ensure the security of the exterior and interior of our physical buildings, and to serve as a visible and proactive threat deterrent ensuring a swift and efficient response in case of emergencies SSOs **will**:

- Verify the security of our physical buildings, parking lots, and perimeters;
- Confirm that all exterior doors are locked and secured;
- Support CEC staff with Standard Response Protocol emergencies and drills;
- Support CEC staff during medical emergencies; and
- Work to build relationships with staff, students, families, local law enforcement, and emergency responders.

SSOs **will not** be involved in any student discipline – student discipline will remain the responsibility and focus of each campus's Campus Culture staff.

Is a School Security Officer the same as a School Resource Officer?

A School Resource Officer is a sworn law enforcement officer who works within the school environment and has law enforcement authority. School Security Officers are highly trained and certified individuals responsible for the security and safety of the school, but they are not sworn law enforcement officers and do not have law enforcement powers.

Will CEC staff be armed?

No. By assigning the responsibility of security to armed SSOs, CEC ensures that the primary responsibility and focus of CEC staff remains on educating students.

Can CEC staff apply for an SSO position?

No, currently employed CEC staff cannot apply for an SSO position as CEC has chosen to contract with outside security firm(s) for this service.

What is the process CEC will follow for selecting the Colorado security firm(s) that will provide SSOs?

CEC's Request for Proposal (RFP) is now available on the School Safety page of the CEC website. The RFP outlines CEC's requirements for SSOs and asks security firms for specific details on qualifications and/or certifications they require of their staff. This open public process allows CEC to find the best and most qualified security firm(s) to contract with. CEC will follow a meticulous and robust evaluation process when vetting the RFPs submitted by Colorado security firms.

Why is CEC waiting until next school year to bring SSOs into its schools?

CEC's focus is to select the right security firm(s) that hires the right people for the job. CEC will not compromise and will take the time needed to make the best decision for our schools.

If CEC finds a qualified security firm(s) with qualified SSOs to serve our campuses, CEC anticipates having SSOs at our schools no earlier than July 2024.

Will staff and families have a chance to meet their school's SSO before the school year starts?

Yes. Prior to the start of the school year, schools will provide an opportunity for parents/guardians, students, and staff to meet with their school's SSO, engage in a Q&A session, and gain a better understanding of the SSO's responsibilities and other security measures in place at the school.