



March 27, 2023

Madam Chair & Members of the Committee:

The Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA) appreciates the opportunity to provide written testimony “on” **HB 3** by Chairman Burrows. The health and safety of students and school district employees is of paramount concern to our membership.

As filed, HB 3 would require every campus to have a minimum of one armed security officer during school hours who could be school district police or resource officers, or employees who have completed certain training and can carry on their person on a campus. Unfortunately, there is a shortage of qualified police officers and security personnel to fill law enforcement jobs currently in existence. School districts across the state would struggle or simply couldn’t comply with this requirement due to the shortage, which are likely more prevalent in small rural areas.

It was noted at a recent senate hearing that costs to hire police officers for campuses can range from \$75-\$100 an hour due to demand and supply issues. We recommend setting implementation goals for this type of requirement over several years to allow school districts time to find and hire armed security officers as the state and local law enforcement agencies seek to remedy the shortage.

We appreciate the initial funding provided in HB 3 as filed but know the amount must be increased so that districts can comply with all state requirements and community safety needs. During several interim hearings, school superintendents provided testimony asking the legislature to increase the school safety allotment from the current \$9.72 per student to \$150-\$200 per student and include a minimum floor for smaller schools, which will likely exceed the allotted \$15,000 per campus in HB 3. Language related to increasing funding to the School Safety Allotment (SSA) also allows for proration as needed. We have concerns that this language could authorize TEA to lessen the amount school districts receive under the SSA without a legislative dictate and we seek clarification of that provision.

TASA appreciates HB 3 provisions that provide confidentiality of information related to monitoring school district safety and security practices to ensure bad actors are unable to access documents as districts work toward meeting all new safety and security guidelines/requirements.

Section 6 of the bill states, “Any proceeds from bonds must be used by ISDs to come into compliance with the school safety standards set forth herein before any other money from bonds can be spent otherwise.” This is not a feasible requirement for bonds that already have dedicated expenditures. We ask that consideration be given to new language that allows districts to incorporate bonds after the effective date of this bill.

TASA applauds Chairman Burrows in his efforts to help districts provide safe campuses for the schoolchildren, teachers and other vital staff. We look forward to working with you as HB 3 moves through the process.

Sincerely,
Amy Beneski