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SUMMARY

Ohio School Safety and Crisis Center

- Creates the Ohio School Safety and Crisis Center within the Department of Public Safety to be operated by the Ohio Mobile Training Team (see below).

Firearms and school safety training

- Requires the Mobile Training Team to develop curriculum and provide instruction and training, including firearms training, that qualifies a person for an exception modified by the act, to go armed in a school safety zone (see below).
- Permits a school district board or school governing body to adopt alternate curriculum, instruction, and training, with Center approval, that individuals may complete to qualify for the exception to convey deadly weapons or dangerous ordnance into a school safety zone.

List of authorized individuals

- Requires each district board or school governing body to provide the Center with a current list of the qualified personnel authorized to convey deadly weapons or dangerous ordnance into a school safety zone who have completed training through the Center or an approved alternate training.

Ohio Mobile Training Team

- Establishes the Ohio Mobile Training Team within the Department of Public Safety.
- Requires the Director of Public Safety to appoint a Chief Mobile Training Officer and 16 regional mobile training officers who provide services regarding school and campus safety and security to primary and secondary schools.

- Requires an officer (1) to be either a licensed peace officer or a veteran of the U.S. armed forces and (2) to have completed any additional training requirements required by rule of the Department of Public Safety.
- Establishes duties for the Chief Mobile Training Officer and regional mobile training officers.

Weapons in a school safety zone

- Modifies an exception, to continuing law prohibitions against having a weapon in a school safety zone, for a person a school district board or school governing body authorizes to have weapons in such a zone, provided that:
 - Either the person has successfully completed the new curriculum and training established under the act, or the person has received a certificate of satisfactory completion of an approved basic peace officer training program or is a law enforcement officer; and
 - The board or governing body has notified the public in a specified manner that the board or governing body has authorized one or more persons to go armed within a school.
- Requires a person who qualifies for the exception modified by the act and is authorized by a district board or school governing body under the provision described above to submit to an annual criminal records check.

Appropriation

- Appropriates \$6 million for each of FYs 2022 and 2023 to the Department of Public Safety for the Ohio Mobile Training Team.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Ohio School Safety and Crisis Center

The act creates the Ohio School Safety and Crisis Center within the Department of Public Safety to provide school safety services to school districts, other public schools, and private schools, including firearms training. It is operated by the Ohio Mobile Training Team (see below).¹

Firearms and school safety instruction

Under the act, the Ohio Mobile Training Team must develop curriculum and provide instruction and training, including firearms training, that qualifies a person for an exception modified by the act, to go armed in a school safety zone.²

¹ R.C. 5502.01(L) and 5502.703(A).

² R.C. 5502.703(B).

The curriculum, instruction, and training developed by the Team must follow the Private Investigator and Security Guard Firearms Training Guidelines³ and include instruction in:

- Mitigation techniques;
- Communications capabilities and coordination and collaboration techniques;
- Neutralization of potential threats and active shooters;
- Accountability;
- Reunifications;
- Psychology of critical incidents;
- De-escalation techniques;
- Crisis intervention;
- Trauma and first aid care;
- The history and pattern of school shootings;
- Tactics of responding to critical incidents in schools;
- At least four hours of training in scenario-based or simulated training exercises;
- Completion of tactical live firearms training; and
- Realistic urban training.⁴

Initial instruction and training may not exceed 24 hours and annual requalification may not exceed eight hours. However, a school district or school may require additional training.⁵

The act further requires school districts and schools to pay all fees for training through the Center for individuals whom they authorize to convey deadly weapons into a school safety zone.⁶

The act also permits a district or school to adopt alternate curriculum, instruction, and training, provided it includes the topics specified above and is approved by the Center.⁷

List of authorized individuals

The act requires each district board or school governing body to provide the Center with a current list of personnel who have qualified for the exception modified by the act and have

³ See R.C. 4749.06, not in the act.

⁴ R.C. 5502.703(B) and (C).

⁵ R.C. 5502.703(B); applies to community schools and STEM schools through references in R.C. 3314.03(A)(11)(d) and 3326.11.

⁶ R.C. 5502.703(C)(2).

⁷ R.C. 5502.703(C)(3).

been authorized to convey deadly weapons or dangerous ordnance into a school safety zone. The act specifies that the list is not a public record.⁸

Ohio Mobile Training Team

The act establishes the Ohio Mobile Training Team within the Department of Public Safety. Under the act, the Director of Public Safety must appoint a Chief Mobile Training Officer by December 11, 2022, to head the Team. The Director then must appoint 16 regional mobile training officers within 90 days after the Chief's appointment. The regional mobile training officers provide services regarding school and campus safety and security to public and nonpublic primary and secondary schools.⁹

Eligibility and training

To be eligible, a Chief Mobile Training Officer or regional mobile training officer must (1) be either a licensed peace officer or a veteran of the U.S. armed forces who has been honorably discharged or who has been transferred to the reserve forces with evidence of satisfactory service and (2) meet all additional qualifications required by rules of the Department of Public Safety.¹⁰

Powers and duties

The act requires the Chief Mobile Training Officer to administer the Team, adopt additional qualifications for regional mobile training officers, and enforce rules and execute additional duties required by the Department of Public Safety.

It also specifies the following duties for each regional mobile training officer:

1. Assist building administrators within the officer's region with the development or review of an emergency management plan,¹¹ upon request;
2. Assist administrators of a public or nonpublic school within the officer's region with any other security protocols for activities or events outside of a school building during or after school hours, upon request;
3. Assist in strategic communications between federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies in the event of an emergency situation at a school within the officer's region, upon request;
4. Offer tactical emergency medical services training to public and nonpublic schools within the officer's region;

⁸ R.C. 149.43(A)(1)(pp) and 5502.703(D).

⁹ R.C. 5502.01(L) and 5502.70.

¹⁰ R.C. 5502.701.

¹¹ R.C. 5502.262.

5. Promote the use of the SaferOH tip line within the officer's region;¹²
6. Enforce rules and execute additional duties prescribed by either the Department of Public Safety or the Chief Mobile Training Officer;
7. Provide instruction and training through the Ohio School Safety and Crisis Center; and
8. Oversee training operations and offer training opportunities for school employees, which may include observing emergency management plan tests, providing weapons manipulation instruction, and other "appropriate activities."¹³

The act permits the Chief Mobile Training Officer and regional mobile training officers to enter into any necessary agreements to carry out their duties. But it also specifies that, generally, they do not have authority over the incident management structure or responsibilities of local emergency response personnel.¹⁴

Mobile training team regions

The act prescribes 16 mobile training team regions to correspond with the regions of the Educational Regional Service System, as shown in the table below.¹⁵

Region	Counties
1	Defiance, Fulton, Hancock, Henry, Lucas, Ottawa, Paulding, Putnam, Sandusky, Seneca, Van Wert, Williams, and Wood
2	Erie, Huron, and Lorain
3	Cuyahoga
4	Geauga and Lake
5	Ashtabula, Mahoning, and Trumbull
6	Allen, Auglaize, Champaign, Hardin, Logan, Mercer, and Shelby
7	Ashland, Crawford, Knox, Marion, Morrow, Richland, and Wyandot
8	Medina, Portage, and Summit

¹² [Safer Ohio School Tip Line](#), which may be accessed by conducting a keyword search for "Safer Ohio School Tip Line" on the Ohio School Safety Center's website, <https://ohioschoolsafetycenter.ohio.gov/home>.

¹³ R.C. 5502.702(B) and (C).

¹⁴ R.C. 5502.70(B) to (D).

¹⁵ R.C. 5502.70(C). See R.C. 3312.02, not in the act.

Region	Counties
9	Columbiana, Stark, and Wayne
10	Clark, Darke, Greene, Miami, Montgomery, and Preble
11	Delaware, Fairfield, Franklin, Licking, Madison, Pickaway, and Union
12	Belmont, Carroll, Coshocton, Guernsey, Harrison, Holmes, Jefferson, Muskingum, Noble, and Tuscarawas
13	Butler, Clermont, Hamilton, and Warren
14	Adams, Brown, Clinton, Fayette, and Highland
15	Lawrence, Pike, Ross, and Scioto
16	Athens, Gallia, Hocking, Jackson, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Perry, Vinton, and Washington

Weapons in a school safety zone

Prohibitions and penalties

Continuing law, unchanged by the act, prohibits a person from: (1) knowingly conveying, or attempting to convey, a deadly weapon or dangerous ordnance into a school safety zone, (2) knowingly possessing a deadly weapon or dangerous ordnance in a school safety zone, or (3) knowingly possessing an object in a school safety zone if the object is indistinguishable from a firearm, whether or not the object is capable of being fired, and the person indicates that the person possesses the object and that it is a firearm, or the person knowingly displays or brandishes the object and indicates that it is a firearm.¹⁶

A violation of the prohibition described in clause (1) or (2) is the offense of “illegal conveyance or possession of a deadly weapon or dangerous ordnance in a school safety zone,” a fourth or fifth degree felony, depending on the circumstances. A violation of the prohibition described in clause (3) is the offense of “illegal possession of an object indistinguishable from a firearm in a school safety zone,” a first degree misdemeanor or fifth degree felony, depending on the circumstances.¹⁷

¹⁶ R.C. 2923.122(A) to (C).

¹⁷ R.C. 2923.122(E).

Exception for person authorized to go armed within a school safety zone in specified circumstances

Continuing law, modified by the act as described below, provides an exception for: (1) a security officer employed by a school district board or school governing body during the time that the security officer is on duty pursuant to that contract of employment, and (2) any other person who has written authorization from the board or governing body to convey deadly weapons or dangerous ordnance into a school safety zone.¹⁸

The act modifies the exception described in clause (2) of the preceding paragraph to provide that both of the following must apply:¹⁹

1. Either the person has successfully completed the curriculum, instruction, and training developed or approved by the Ohio Mobile Training Team or the person has received a certificate of having satisfactorily completed an approved basic peace officer training program or is a law enforcement officer; and
2. The board or governing body has notified the public that it has authorized one or more persons to go armed within a school body.

The act also requires a person who qualifies under this exception to submit to an annual criminal records check.²⁰

Elimination of basic peace officer training requirement

The act expressly exempts the specified categories of persons who are covered by the exception to the offense of “having weapons in a school safety zone” modified by the act as described above from being required to complete an approved basic peace officer training program.

Continuing law, modified by the act as described below, specifies that no public or private educational institution or Superintendent of the State Highway Patrol may employ a person as a special police officer, security guard, or other position in which such person goes armed while on duty, who has not received a certificate of having satisfactorily completed an approved basic peace officer training program, unless the person has completed 20 years of active duty as a peace officer.²¹ Peace officer basic training is provided by training schools certified by the Ohio Peace Officer Training Commission (OPOTC).

The act specifies that the provision described in the preceding paragraph does not apply to a person who is employed by a public or chartered nonpublic school and who has been authorized to voluntarily go armed within a school safety zone, if both of the following apply with respect to the employment and person:

¹⁸ R.C. 2923.122(D)(1).

¹⁹ R.C. 2923.122(D)(1)(d).

²⁰ R.C. 2923.122(D)(1)(d), by reference to R.C. 3319.39 and 3319.391, not in the act.

²¹ R.C. 109.78(D)(1).

1. The person is within the category of persons authorized to go armed within a school safety zone; and
2. The person is not being employed as a special police officer or security officer.²²

The General Assembly declares in the act that the purpose of these provisions is to expressly overrule the decision of the Ohio Supreme Court in *Gabbard v. Madison Local School Dist. Bd. of Edn.*²³ In *Gabbard*, the Court held that the provision described in the second preceding paragraph prohibits a school from employing a person who goes armed while on duty in the person's job unless the employee has satisfactorily completed an approved basic peace officer training program or has 20 years of experience as a peace officer. The Court further ruled in *Gabbard* that the exceptions described above do not provide schools with a mechanism to circumvent that requirement.

Public notice requirement

The act requires a district board or school governing body to notify the public, by whatever means it regularly communicates with the public, if it has authorized one or more persons to go armed within the school. That public notice is not a "security record" or "infrastructure record" that is exempt from the Public Records Law.²⁴

Appropriation

The act appropriates to the Department of Public Safety \$6 million for each of FY 2022 and FY 2023 for the Ohio Mobile Training Team.²⁵

HISTORY

Action	Date
Introduced	02-09-21
Reported, H. Criminal Justice	11-10-21
Passed House (59-33)	11-17-21
Reported, S. Veterans and Public Safety	06-01-22
Passed Senate (23-9)	06-01-22
House concurred in Senate amendments (56-35)	06-01-22

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²² R.C. 109.78(D)(2).

²³ R.C. 109.78(E) and *Gabbard v. Madison Local School Dist. Bd. of Edn.* (June 23, 2021), 165 Ohio St.3d 390, 2021-Ohio-2067.

²⁴ R.C. 149.433(B)(1), (2), and (4) and 2923.122(D)(1)(d).

²⁵ Sections 3 to 5 of the act.