

School Security Guard

PA requirements • role options • armed credentials • PVSD job description highlights

Purpose tonight

Summarize the state requirement and clarify why the proposed PVSD role is titled and structured as a School Security Guard with districtwide safety responsibilities.

Key distinction

The title does not automatically create police powers. Authority depends on statutory classification, training, and approvals.

When did Pennsylvania require this?

Beginning with the 2024–2025 school year

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At least one full-time school security personnel

A school district must have properly trained personnel on duty during the school day unless granted a waiver by PCCD's School Safety and Security Committee.

School day = morning opening of a school building through afternoon student dismissal

District may directly employ or contract for qualified personnel

Board may assign security coverage for extracurricular events outside the school day

Important clarification for PVSD

- The state requirement is for trained school security personnel; it does not require every district position to be a police officer.
- The requirement can be met by an SPO, SRO, or School Security Guard who completes the required training.
- The state requirement does not, by itself, require the position to be armed.

Three recognized PA school security personnel roles

Article XIII-C distinguishes authority, employer relationship, and training pathway

School Police Officer (SPO)

Law enforcement officer employed/contracted by the school entity; police powers depend on statutory/court authority.

School Resource Officer (SRO)

Commissioned law enforcement officer employed by a law enforcement agency and stationed in school by agreement.

School Security Guard (SSG)

District, vendor, contractor, or independent contractor role for routine safety/security duties; no school police powers.

Common required baseline

- All categories are “school security personnel” under PA guidance.
- Personnel hired on/after September 2, 2019 must complete required instruction before beginning duties.
- School Security Guard role may include safety support, enhanced campus supervision, disruptive-student assistance, visitor monitoring, law enforcement coordination, and other safety functions.

PVSD proposed title: School Security Guard with districtwide safety responsibilities

Armed requirements & certifications

Requirements vary by role; School Security Guard has specific armed criteria

Only “school security personnel” may be authorized by a school entity to carry firearms while performing school duties.

Armed School Security Guard

- Uniform Firearms Act license
- Current Act 235 certification
- Required school security personnel training
- Required background checks and clearances
- Active/retired law enforcement exemptions may apply

School Police Officer

- MPOETC basic training or PSP Academy pathway when applicable
- NASRO Basic SRO course or PCCD-approved equivalent
- Annual MPOETC in-service training
- Court/authority process controls powers and firearm authority

School Resource Officer

- Commissioned law enforcement officer
- Employed by law enforcement agency
- Stationed in school by agreement
- NASRO Basic SRO course or PCCD-approved equivalent before duties

PVSD policy choice: The job description can reserve armed status for separate Board direction, solicitor review, required credentials, insurance review, and use-of-force procedures.

PVSD School Security Guard: job description highlights

Designed as a district safety role with practical school-based security coverage

- Serve as District lead safety/security employee supporting a safe, secure, orderly, welcoming school environment.
- Provide districtwide safety/security presence across buildings, grounds, events, athletic areas, parking, and transportation areas.
- Monitor entrances, common areas, visitor access, cameras, radios, access control, and incident-reporting systems.
- Respond to safety concerns, threats, disturbances, unauthorized visitors, alarms, medical emergencies, and suspicious activity.
- Use de-escalation, conflict resolution, trauma-informed, and student-centered practices.
- Assist administrators, HR, and District administration with safety-related investigations and administrative fact-finding.
- Assist with searches when authorized by administration and conducted under Board policy, student handbooks, law, and District procedures.
- Preserve evidence and assist with chain-of-custody documentation as needed.
- Support Emergency Operations Plan, drills, threat assessment, Safe2Say Something responses, and first-responder coordination.
- Recommend improvements to physical security, supervision, training, and emergency communication.

Guardrail: This role supports District safety and administration; it does not exercise police powers unless separately authorized under PA law and District procedure.

Recommended Board message

A compliant, district-employed safety model for PVSD

Why this role fits PVSD

- Meets the state’s trained school security personnel expectation.
- Creates consistent district oversight rather than relying solely on third-party coverage.
- Aligns daily building security with emergency planning, threat assessment, drills, and first responder coordination.
- Clarifies that investigations and searches are administrative supports, not independent police powers.

Suggested public wording

“The District is recommending a School Security Guard position that will provide trained school security personnel coverage and support districtwide safety planning, emergency preparedness, investigations, searches conducted under Board policy, and coordination with law enforcement and first responders.”

Decision point: authorize interviewing process for a School Security Guard / District safety role.