



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HILLSBORO, Mo. – The Hillsboro R-3 Board of Education has approved a comprehensive School Safety Officer (SSO) Program designed to strengthen campus security, enhance emergency preparedness, and provide a dedicated safety presence at every district school beginning with the 2026-2027 school year.

The new program represents a significant investment in student and staff safety and reflects the district's ongoing commitment to maintaining secure, welcoming, and supportive learning environments across all Hillsboro R-3 schools.

Under the approved model, Hillsboro R-3 will employ five full-time School Safety Officers, with one assigned to each district attendance center:

- Hillsboro Primary School
- Hillsboro Elementary School
- Hillsboro Intermediate School
- Hillsboro Junior High School
- Hillsboro High School

One School Safety Officer will also serve as the district's Director of School Safety, coordinating district-wide safety initiatives, emergency preparedness planning, staff training, and operational safety support.

The School Safety Officers will be highly trained professionals with backgrounds in law enforcement and public safety. Officers will be uniformed, armed, and required to maintain all certifications and training required by Missouri law. In addition to their safety responsibilities, School Safety Officers will work to build positive relationships with students, staff, and families while serving as trusted and accessible members of the school community.

"Nothing is more important than the safety of our children and the staff members who care for them every day," said Dr. Jon Isaacson, Superintendent of Schools. "As a community, we have a responsibility to do everything within our power to provide a safe, secure, and supportive learning environment. This investment reflects our commitment to taking every reasonable step possible to protect our students and ensure our schools remain safe places where children can learn, grow, and succeed."

In addition to supporting building security and emergency preparedness efforts, School Safety Officers will assist with daily school operations, visitor management, student arrival and dismissal procedures, campus supervision, event security, and district-wide safety planning.

Their responsibilities will include:

- Supporting campus safety and supervision
- Assisting with visitor management and building security procedures
- Enhancing emergency preparedness and response readiness
- Building positive relationships with students and staff
- Coordinating with administrators and emergency responders
- Supporting district safety operations and planning
- Assisting with student arrival and dismissal procedures and traffic flow
- Providing security support at extracurricular activities and district-sponsored events

As part of the transition, Hillsboro R-3 will continue its longstanding partnership with the City of Hillsboro Police Department. Under the new structure, the district anticipates transitioning from two shared School Resource Officers serving the district to one dedicated full-time School Resource Officer assigned exclusively to Hillsboro High School.

The School Resource Officer will maintain a visible presence at the high school's main entrance and continue to support law enforcement coordination, emergency response planning, visitor management, and school safety initiatives.

"Parents trust us with what matters most to them, their children," Isaacson said. "We take that responsibility seriously. When it comes to the safety of our children, standing still is not an option. Our Board of Education and district leadership team believe we must continuously evaluate and strengthen our safety measures whenever opportunities exist to do so. This investment demonstrates our commitment to doing everything reasonably possible to protect our students and staff each day."

The new structure expands the district's current safety model by providing dedicated safety personnel at every attendance center while strengthening district-wide coordination and emergency preparedness efforts.

The program includes extended contracts beyond the traditional school year, allowing officers to support summer school operations, safety training, building assessments, emergency planning activities, and year-round safety coordination.

The district estimates the enhanced safety model represents an additional annual investment of approximately \$150,000. The investment will expand safety coverage to every district attendance center, strengthen emergency preparedness efforts, enhance visitor management, and ensure that every Hillsboro R-3 school has a dedicated safety professional present throughout the school day.

Implementation of the School Safety Officer Program will begin immediately, with officers expected to be in place for the start of the 2026-2027 school year.

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