



SANTA FE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

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www.sfid.org

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Superintendent of Schools



March 6, 2020

Dear Santa Fe ISD Family,

Santa Fe ISD is committed to providing a safe and secure learning environment for our students, teachers, and staff. This commitment is reflected in our continuous evaluation of our resources, programs, policies, and processes and the many best-practice safety and security initiatives in place across the district.

As you may know, the Santa Fe ISD Board of Trustees approved the implementation of the Guardian Program. Under Texas Penal Code Section 46.03, the Guardian Program grants the Board of Trustees the authority to authorize certain individuals to carry a weapon on district property. As a last line of defense measure, the Guardian Program adds to the safety and security infrastructure, training, and resource enhancements that have been taking place across the district over the past several years. The implementation will officially take place following Spring Break. Visibly, you will notice the addition of signage around our school buildings indicating that personnel on campus may be armed. There will be no additional impacts from this implementation on our students, staff, or the day-to-day school routine.

The adoption and implementation of the Guardian Program was recommended to the Board by a safety subcommittee made up of Santa Fe ISD parents and community members. The Board of Trustees' decision to approve the implementation of the program resulted from years of research and investigation, a due diligence effort which included conversations with school districts that have been utilizing the program since its' approval in 2013. Santa Fe ISD joins more than 300 school districts across Texas to implement the Guardian Program.

Some important information about the Guardian Program is available below:

- Guardian Program participation is strictly voluntary - no employee will be required to participate, and the district may revoke an employee's participation at any time.
- Employees who are currently licensed to carry a weapon in the State of Texas are eligible to volunteer and apply to be considered for the Guardian Program.
- The selection process will require criminal background screening, as well as psychological evaluations utilizing the same process and standards as police officer applicants.

- Approved applicants for the Guardian Program will be required to complete a rigorous application process including a minimum of 40 hours of comprehensive classroom/live fire course instruction meeting the same marksmanship qualification standards as a Santa Fe ISD Police Officer.
- Program participants will be required to complete annual training including live fire weapons practice and marksmanship qualifications in order to maintain their eligibility for participation.
- A Guardian is considered a last line of defense for classroom teachers or district employees to protect their own life and the life of any third-party in their charge - the program is not designed for the Guardian to leave their area of responsibility and act as a first responder.
- In the interest of district security and maintaining the integrity of the program, the District will not be releasing the identity or numbers of District employees selected as Guardian program participants in accordance with applicable provisions of the Texas Government Code Chapter 552.
- The implementation of the Guardian Program will take place following Spring Break with signage added around school buildings to indicate that personnel on campus may be armed.

It is important to note, once again, that in the interest of district security and maintaining the integrity of the program, the District will not be releasing the identity or numbers of District employees selected as Guardian program participants in accordance with applicable provisions of the Texas Government Code Chapter 552.

We appreciate the support of our community as we continue to ensure our district and our schools meet the highest standards for safety and security infrastructure, training, and resources. Please direct any questions you may have to www.santafeupdates.com as we will be compiling them for a community update with answers to frequently asked questions regarding the Guardian Program and its implementation upon our return on March 16, 2020.

Have a very safe and restful Spring Break.

Sincerely,

Leigh Wall, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools