Utah H.B. 140: School Safety Policy & Amendments

By ClearlyIP   Published February 17, 2025   25 min read

Utah H.B. 140 – School Safety Amendments: Comprehensive Policy Overview

Legislative Context and Background

Utah has recently undertaken a series of legislative efforts to strengthen school safety, driven in part by national school shooting tragedies and local concerns. In 2023 and 2024, the Utah Legislature passed multiple bills addressing school security, emergency preparedness, and violence prevention in schools. **House Bill 140 (H.B. 140)** – titled *Standard Response Protocol to Active*

Threats in Schools – was one component of this broader push (Source: le.utah.gov). H.B. 140 was sponsored by Rep. Dan Johnson and passed during the 2023 General Session. It built upon earlier legislation like **H.B. 61 (2023)**, known as the School Security Act or School Safety Requirements, which established a new **State Security Chief** within the Department of Public Safety to oversee and enforce school safety laws (Source: billtrack50.com). H.B. 61 also created a **School Security Task Force** to advise on training standards, required every public school to designate a school safety specialist, and directed the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) to set up a grant program for school safety initiatives (Source: billtrack50.com). In 2024, lawmakers continued refining school safety policy with **H.B. 84 (2024) – School Safety Amendments**, a sweeping law that appropriated funding (including $100 million one-time) for safety upgrades (Source: kuer.org) and mandated comprehensive safety needs assessments for every school (Source: makeourschoolssafe.org)(Source: makeourschoolssafe.org). Together, these measures reflect Utah's commitment to a **multi-faceted school safety framework** involving state authorities, education officials, and law enforcement at all levels.

Goals of H.B. 140 and Related Measures

H.B. 140 (2023) had a focused objective: to **improve schools' preparedness for active threats** (such as an active shooter or other violent intruder scenarios) by standardizing emergency response protocols across Utah. A key goal was to **codify existing safety drills and planning requirements into state law**, ensuring they are uniformly implemented statewide (Source: le.utah.gov). The bill's chief sponsor described the intent as setting "a minimum standard that is clear to all that are involved and that we can implement across the state" (Source: upr.org). In practical terms, H.B. 140 aimed to ensure that every school regularly practices how to respond to life-threatening emergencies in a developmentally appropriate way. This emphasis on **regular active threat drills** was driven by recognition that consistent practice can save lives in a crisis. Beyond H.B. 140, Utah's broader school safety legislation pursued complementary goals: hardening school facilities, improving communication and coordination with law enforcement, and preventing violence. For example, **H.B. 61 (2023)** sought to **place at least one trained, armed security presence in each school** (through a school resource officer, "school guardian" staff member, or security guard) and to deploy modern security technology like weapons detection systems (Source: billtrack50.com)(Source: upr.org). **H.B. 84 (2024)** further aimed to systematically **identify and address safety vulnerabilities** in every school via needs assessments, and it established pathways for schools to request alternative safety arrangements when standard requirements might not fit their circumstances (Source: makeourschoolssafe.org)(Source: makeourschoolssafe.org). In sum,

the overarching goals have been to create safer school environments through prevention, preparedness, and coordinated response, while providing resources and flexibility to meet each school's needs.

Key Provisions of H.B. 140 – "Standard Response Protocol"

H.B. 140 itself introduced targeted amendments to Utah's education code to bolster emergency preparedness drills. Its **key provisions** included:

- **Monthly Emergency Drills for Active Threats:** The law requires that each public school conduct **active threat emergency response drills or trainings on a monthly basis** (Source: upr.org). This is a significant increase in frequency (many schools previously held lockdown or shooter drills only a few times per year). The drills must be **"developmentally appropriate"** for different grade levels (Source: upr.org) – for example, younger children might practice simple lockdown procedures in a non-traumatizing way, while older students and staff might engage in more realistic simulations. By mandating monthly drills, H.B. 140 ensures that emergency response protocols (often referred to as the "Standard Response Protocol") become routine and familiar to students and faculty. It effectively codified portions of existing State Board of Education administrative rules on emergency preparedness into statute (Source: le.utah.gov), elevating their importance.

- **Emergency Preparedness Plans and Training:** Along with drills, the bill reinforced requirements for schools to maintain up-to-date ** emergency response plans** for a variety of scenarios (e.g. active shooter, natural disasters, etc.) (Source: le.utah.gov). H.B. 140 grants the **State Board of Education rulemaking authority** to flesh out training curricula and drill procedures (Source: le.utah.gov). This means USBE can issue detailed rules to guide schools on how to conduct these monthly drills and train staff, ensuring consistency statewide. Schools must train employees and students on the standard protocols for lockdown, evacuation, reunification, and other responses to threats. By writing these expectations into law, H.B. 140 aimed to guarantee that no school overlooks regular practice of emergency procedures.

- **Integration with Law Enforcement Response:** The standard response protocol emphasizes coordination with law enforcement during an active threat. While H.B. 140 mainly addresses school-based drills, it exists within a framework that encourages close collaboration between schools and local police. For instance, concurrent policies require that **schools enter into emergency response agreements with local law enforcement agencies** (Source: le.utah.gov) and include law enforcement officers in drill planning when appropriate. The intent

is that in a real crisis, school personnel and first responders will be on the same page, having practiced the same protocols. This provision aligns with broader efforts (in H.B. 61 and others) to ensure that School Resource Officers (SROs) and other responders are well-integrated into school safety plans (including mandatory SRO training standards set by the State Board in consultation with the State Security Chief (Source: le.utah.gov)).

In summary, H.B. 140's core contribution was making **active threat preparedness a continual, uniform practice across all Utah schools**. This dovetails with other safety requirements – for example, having an armed safety officer on campus – by ensuring that the presence of security personnel is complemented by practiced emergency procedures for all.

School Safety Needs Assessments: Frequency and Purpose

One of the most significant developments in Utah's school safety policy (though enacted via 2024 amendments, not in H.B. 140 itself) is the requirement for regular **School Safety Needs Assessments** at every school. These assessments are a linchpin of the broader safety framework, and understanding their frequency and role is crucial. **How often must each school complete a safety needs assessment?** Current Utah law specifies that **each school must undergo a comprehensive safety needs assessment** *at least once every three years* (Source: le.utah.gov). In practice, this means schools will operate on a **three-year assessment cycle** – evaluating their safety strengths and deficiencies, planning improvements, and then revisiting the assessment within three years to update it. This interval was established to ensure that safety plans remain dynamic; as schools implement upgrades or as new threats emerge, the periodic reassessment guarantees no school's security plan becomes outdated. Notably, the *initial* round of assessments was fast-tracked – the 2024 legislation (H.B. 84) required that **every school conduct its first safety needs assessment by December 31, 2024** (Source: makeourschoolssafe.org). That deadline spurred all Utah local education agencies (LEAs) to evaluate their campuses' security needs by the end of 2024. Going forward, **"at least once every three years"** is the minimum, though schools or the state could choose to assess more frequently if needed (Source: le.utah.gov).

What does the school safety needs assessment entail? By statute, it is a **comprehensive evaluation of a school's safety and security needs and deficiencies** (Source: le.utah.gov) (Source: le.utah.gov). The law outlines several core areas the assessment must cover for each school:

- **School Safety Personnel Needs:** An evaluation of whether the school has appropriate **school safety personnel** in place (Source: le.utah.gov). This includes reviewing the need for *armed security* at the school (such as SROs, school "guardians" – trained staff allowed to be armed, or hired security guards) and ensuring the school has assigned the required **School Safety and Security Specialist** and **Director** roles (which were mandated by 2023 laws) (Source: makeourschoolssafe.org). The assessment examines if personnel have the necessary training, support, and policies to be effective (Source: le.utah.gov). For example, if a school lacks an SRO due to staffing shortages, that would be identified as a deficiency to address or justify an alternative solution.

- **Physical Facilities and Technology:** A thorough inspection of the **physical security of school buildings and grounds** (Source: le.utah.gov). Assessors look at door locks, entry controls, fencing, lighting, line-of-sight issues, and other hardening measures. They also inventory safety technology in place – for instance, surveillance camera systems, secure vestibules, alarm systems, and newly required devices like **panic alert systems**. (In fact, Utah passed "Alyssa's Law" in 2024, requiring every public and charter school classroom to be equipped with a **wearable panic alert device** for emergencies (Source: centegix.com), so an assessment will verify compliance with that as well.) Any needed upgrades to facilities or technology (e.g. installing more cameras or shatter-resistant glass) are noted so that schools can plan to implement them.

- **Emergency Response Protocols and Training:** A review of the school's current **threat and emergency response plans** (Source: le.utah.gov). This involves confirming that the school has up-to-date emergency operations plans for various scenarios, and that protocols (like the **Standard Response Protocol** for active threats) are being practiced regularly (this ties back to H.B. 140's drill requirement). Assessors will check for things like: Are required fire, earthquake, and lockdown drills being conducted? Does the school have an effective parent-student reunification plan after an emergency? Are teachers and students trained on what to do if there's a bomb threat, etc.? Additionally, the assessment looks at **agreements with local law enforcement** and first responders (Source: le.utah.gov) – for example, ensuring the school and police/fire departments have coordinated plans for who does what in an emergency. Any gaps in planning or training are identified.

- **Additional Safety Domains:** Recent amendments have expanded the assessment scope to cover areas like **cardiac emergency preparedness** (e.g. availability of automated external defibrillators and training in their use) (Source: le.utah.gov). Behavioral and mental health

components can also intersect with safety – while not explicitly listed in the needs assessment statute, schools are generally encouraged to evaluate their crisis counseling resources and threat assessment teams for identifying students who may pose a risk.

Each school's **School Safety and Security Specialist** (a staff member designated to coordinate campus security) is responsible for carrying out the assessment, **working in collaboration with law enforcement**. By law, the county sheriff's office assigns a **County Security Chief** or another law enforcement official to assist every school in the assessment process (Source: makeourschoolssafe.org). In practice, this means a team approach: the school's safety specialist, an LEA or district safety director, and a local police/sheriff representative walk through the campus together, review policies, and jointly evaluate vulnerabilities. This collaborative model ensures that **expertise from law enforcement (e.g. crime prevention through environmental design, active shooter tactics) informs the school's evaluation** (Source: makeourschoolssafe.org). It also builds relationships between schools and first responders. The completed needs assessment for each school is then reported to the **State Security Chief and the Utah School Safety Center** (Source: makeourschoolssafe.org). (The School Safety Center is an office within USBE focused on school safety resources and data, and it partners closely with the State Security Chief.)

Emphasis on Frequency: The **"at least once every three years"** mandate is crucial for sustainability. It means school safety is not a one-time check, but an ongoing cycle of improvement. For example, if a school completes its initial assessment in 2024 and identifies several needs (say, installing better door locks and hiring an additional security officer), the school and district can use state **grant funds** to address those. By the time of the next assessment (by 2027), those upgrades will be in place and new issues or evolving threats (perhaps cybersecurity or new building expansions) can be evaluated. Utah code now embeds this cycle, stating that the safety needs assessment **"shall be conducted at least once every three years for each school or K-12 campus"** (Source: le.utah.gov). Notably, an LEA cannot simply do this on paper and shelve it – the **Utah State Board of Education and the State Security Chief use the results** to drive decision-making. State law directs USBE to utilize each school's assessment results when awarding funds from the **School Safety Grant Program** (Source: le.utah.gov). Schools with more urgent or significant safety deficiencies (as evidenced by their assessment) may be prioritized for grants to fix those issues (Source: le.utah.gov). This creates an incentive for diligent assessments and honest reporting of needs. Moreover, the information from assessments, while kept confidential for security reasons, can guide state-level policy (e.g. if many schools report a lack of secure vestibules, the legislature might fund a statewide initiative to install them).

Broader Framework: Roles of Agencies and Implementation Strategies

Utah's approach to school safety, as amended by H.B. 140 and its companion bills, involves **multiple stakeholders with defined responsibilities**:

- **Utah State Board of Education (USBE):** The State Board plays a central role in implementation. It is empowered to make administrative **rules** to carry out the intent of these laws – for instance, crafting the specific standards for the active threat drills required by H.B. 140 (Source: le.utah.gov), and setting certification and training requirements for school safety personnel. USBE also hosts the **Utah School Safety Center**, which provides resources, training, and technical assistance to districts. Following the new laws, USBE has issued guidance on how to perform the required needs assessments: for the 2024-25 cycle, the State Safety Center (in collaboration with the State Security Chief) **recommended nationally-recognized assessment tools** such as the CISA (Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency) School Security Assessment Tool and the Partner Alliance for Safer Schools checklist (Source: schools.utah.gov)(Source: schools.utah.gov). The Board also collects data from schools – for example, it will compile the annual incidents report referenced in legislation and track compliance. Critically, USBE manages the **School Safety Grant Program** (sometimes called the School Safety and Support Grant), distributing funding to LEAs to make safety improvements. By statute, the Board must use schools' needs assessment results to inform grant awards (Source: le.utah.gov), ensuring funds address the documented deficiencies. Additionally, USBE coordinates with the State Security Chief on setting **minimum safety standards** for school facilities and approving training curricula (Source: le.utah.gov)(Source: le.utah.gov). In short, the State Board provides the educational oversight and rulemaking to align local school policies with state safety mandates.

- **Local Education Agencies (School Districts and Charter Schools):** LEAs are on the front lines of implementation. Each LEA must **designate a School Safety and Security Director** at the district/charter level (Source: makeourschoolssafe.org), who serves as the point of contact with state officials and law enforcement. The Director oversees safety efforts across schools, helps secure funding, and ensures that each school complies with requirements (for example, scheduling the monthly drills and completing the needs assessments on time). At the individual school level, the principal (or another administrator) must appoint a **School Safety and Security Specialist** for that campus (Source: makeourschoolssafe.org). This specialist cannot be the principal or a teacher in most cases (to ensure they can focus on safety duties) (Source:

le.utah.gov). The specialist coordinates the school's safety programs: conducting the needs assessment, organizing drills, facilitating training for staff, and liaising with first responders. LEAs are responsible for ensuring that, based on each school's needs assessment findings, appropriate **armed safety personnel** are assigned. State law now requires that *each school must have* **at least one of the following** on site: a certified **School Resource Officer (SRO)**, a trained **School Guardian** (school employee authorized to carry a firearm), or a licensed **armed security guard**, *unless* an alternative arrangement is approved (Source: makeourschoolssafe.org). Thus, districts must either hire or contract for these positions or work with the State Security Chief to get an exemption if they plan a different approach. LEAs also handle the infrastructure improvements identified – for example, working with architects to retrofit buildings for security or installing the panic alarm devices as mandated. To assist with these burdens, LEAs receive state funding and can apply for grants. Many districts created local safety task forces or committees to implement the new mandates and share best practices. In sum, LEAs and schools carry out the day-to-day work of upgrading security and running safety programs, under state oversight.

- **State Security Chief (Department of Public Safety) and Law Enforcement:** A major element of Utah's school safety strategy is the integration of law enforcement expertise at every level. The **State Security Chief**, a position established in 2023, resides within the Department of Public Safety (DPS) and is charged with **state-level oversight and enforcement of school security measures** (Source: billtrack50.com). This individual (and their office) acts as the bridge between education officials and law enforcement agencies. The State Security Chief's duties include developing statewide school security standards (in partnership with USBE), approving training programs for school safety personnel (e.g. firearms training curriculum for armed staff, SRO training modules) (Source: le.utah.gov)(Source: le.utah.gov), and monitoring compliance. Notably, the State Security Chief has authority to **grant exceptions or modifications** to certain requirements on a case-by-case basis (Source: policies.emeryschools.org)(Source: policies.emeryschools.org). For example, if a small rural school cannot feasibly staff a full-time SRO or guardian immediately, the State Security Chief can approve an alternative safety plan for that school, possibly with conditions. This flexibility mechanism, written into H.B. 84, allows for pragmatic solutions while still holding schools accountable to meet safety standards as soon as possible (Source: makeourschoolssafe.org). The **County Security Chiefs** are the counterparts at the local level – by law, each county sheriff in Utah must designate someone from their office as the County Security Chief to focus on school safety coordination (Source: le.utah.gov). The County Security Chief works closely with all LEAs in the county, **conducting the on-site safety assessments with school specialists**, providing or facilitating required trainings (such as firearm safety and use-of-force training for

school guardians and security officers) (Source: le.utah.gov), and verifying that new school construction projects meet safety design standards before they open (Source: le.utah.gov). Beyond the sheriff's office, municipal police departments are also involved: local law enforcement agencies are expected to participate in school safety drills and the assessments for schools in their jurisdiction. In fact, statute now directs that local law enforcement allocate personnel to help with the **annual cycle of school safety needs assessments** in their area (Source: makeourschoolssafe.org). This ensures that every school, even those not covered by a Sheriff's deputy, has police input during the evaluation of its security. Finally, school-based officers (SROs) have defined roles through memoranda of understanding with districts (as refined by these recent laws). They not only provide daily security and response capability, but also contribute to prevention by serving on **behavioral threat assessment teams** and by receiving specialized training to handle school situations appropriately (as required by USBE rule) (Source: billtrack50.com). Overall, Utah's model heavily involves law enforcement in proactive prevention and preparedness, not just emergency response, reflecting a coordinated public safety approach to protecting schools.

- **School Safety Task Force and Ongoing Oversight:** To guide and oversee these extensive changes, the legislature empowered a **School Security Task Force** (mentioned in H.B. 61) that brings together lawmakers, education leaders, law enforcement, and other experts (Source: billtrack50.com). Rep. Ryan Wilcox, a key sponsor of the 2023 and 2024 safety legislation, chairs this task force (Source: kuer.org). The task force meets regularly to review implementation progress, address challenges, and recommend any further legislative tweaks. For example, after the 2024 law's passage, the task force identified funding shortfalls – many in the education community voiced that $100 million would not cover all necessary upgrades statewide (Source: kuer.org)(Source: kuer.org). In response, the task force prepared budget requests for the 2025 session to secure additional funding (estimating needs up to $800 million after seeing initial assessment results) (Source: kuer.org)(Source: kuer.org). The task force also considered technical "clean-up" amendments. Indeed, in 2025 the legislature passed **H.B. 40 – School Safety Amendments**, which adjusted timelines and requirements based on feedback (for instance, clarifying the **frequency of the safety needs assessments as every three years** and updating training and reporting provisions). This iterative oversight ensures Utah's school safety policies remain practical and effective as they roll out.

Compliance and Enforcement Mechanisms

Ensuring that hundreds of schools and dozens of LEAs adhere to the new safety mandates is a considerable challenge. Utah's laws therefore include several **compliance and enforcement mechanisms**:

- **Mandated Timelines and Reporting:** The laws set explicit deadlines (e.g. the Dec. 31, 2024 assessment completion date (Source: policies.emeryschools.org), or the requirement for monthly drills (Source: upr.org)) and require reporting of compliance. LEAs must certify to the state that they have completed the required safety needs assessments for each school and must **report the results** to the State Security Chief and School Safety Center (Source: le.utah.gov)(Source: le.utah.gov). This centralized reporting allows the state to track which schools have complied. If a school fails to submit an assessment or neglects drills, that non-compliance will be apparent to state overseers. Similarly, LEAs had to report by 2023-2024 on the designation of their safety directors and specialists, and whether they have armed security in each school, as these are now statutory requirements. The **Utah State Board of Education** can compile these reports and flag any schools or districts that are falling behind. In some cases, the law built in staged requirements – for example, H.B. 61 (2023) gave schools until the 2023-2024 school year to assign safety specialists and until the 2024-2025 year to get armed security personnel in place, with the State Security Chief empowered to set exact timelines and extensions as needed (Source: le.utah.gov). This phased approach, coupled with required status updates, creates accountability over time.

- **State Security Chief Oversight and Authority:** The **State Security Chief** serves as the state's enforcement arm for school safety. According to the School Security Act, the State Security Chief's role is to **"enforce school safety laws and regulations"** across Utah's schools (Source: billtrack50.com). This broad mandate means the chief can investigate non-compliance, issue directives, and coordinate corrective actions. If an LEA is not meeting a particular requirement, the State Security Chief (often working with USBE) can first offer **technical assistance** or guidance to help them comply. For instance, if a rural school struggles to find a qualified armed guard, the chief might connect them with training programs or alternative solutions. If non-compliance persists, the State Security Chief can escalate the issue – reporting it to the State Board of Education or even up to the legislature if necessary. One concrete power is the ability to **deny or revoke approved alternatives/exemptions**: if a school has received permission for an alternative safety plan in lieu of a requirement, but then fails to fulfill that plan's conditions, the chief can revoke the authorization, forcing the school to comply with standard requirements (Source: legiscan.com)(Source: legiscan.com). Additionally, the

State Security Chief helps establish a **tiered compliance framework** in rules – for example, defining what constitutes a "compliance issue" and outlining steps for remediation. This might involve on-site audits of school safety measures or requiring an LEA to submit a corrective action plan. While Utah's laws do not set explicit monetary penalties for non-compliant schools, there is an implicit financial lever: schools that do not complete their safety assessments or ignore safety standards risk being ineligible for state safety grants (since the grants are tied to the assessment process). In extreme cases, if a district willfully violated safety statutes, the state could potentially involve Utah's Office of Education Law or even impose accreditation consequences, though such measures would likely be last resorts. The emphasis so far has been on **collaborative enforcement** – using the authority of the State Security Chief and the resources of the School Safety Center to bring schools into compliance through support and oversight, rather than punishment.

- **Local Policy Requirements:** At the district level, school boards are updating their own policies to mirror state law, which adds another layer of enforcement. For example, school district policies now explicitly require the completion of the safety needs assessment for each school and reporting of results to the state (Source: policies.emeryschools.org)(Source: policies.emeryschools.org). A principal or school that neglects these duties would be violating both state law and district policy, subject to local administrative action. Districts may assign internal compliance officers or use existing accreditation reviews to check that schools are conducting drills and implementing safety plans. The clear articulation of these duties in local policy (often quoting the code directly) means school administrators are on notice of their obligations.

- **Confidentiality and Data Handling:** A subtle but important aspect of enforcement is managing the sensitive information that comes from safety assessments. Utah law classifies each school's detailed needs assessment results as protected information (for obvious security reasons). The code spells out that these results can only be shared with certain parties – e.g. the school's administrators, the LEA, the State Board (as needed for grants), the State Security Chief and designated safety officials (Source: le.utah.gov). By controlling dissemination, the state ensures that potential security weaknesses aren't widely exposed. It also creates a controlled channel: schools must submit results to the state, but cannot simply publish or ignore them. This controlled reporting structure supports enforcement, as mentioned, because it funnels compliance data to state overseers while preventing public disclosure that could pose a risk. In fact, any unauthorized release of a school's needs assessment details would violate state law. This emphasis on confidentiality reinforces to schools that the assessments are serious, formal evaluations, not just informal checklists.

In conclusion, Utah's H.B. 140 and related school safety amendments have established a **robust framework for school safety** that combines frequent emergency preparedness drills, periodic comprehensive safety assessments, enhanced coordination with law enforcement, and the placement of trained security personnel in schools. **Each school is now required to complete a thorough safety needs assessment at least once every three years** (Source: le.utah.gov), ensuring an ongoing cycle of evaluation and improvement in school security. The legislative package surrounding H.B. 140 set clear goals – from improved active threat response to upgraded facilities – and backed them with resources (grants and funding) as well as oversight mechanisms. The **Utah State Board of Education**, through the School Safety Center, provides guidance and uses rulemaking to implement these laws, while the **State Security Chief and law enforcement partners** bring expertise and enforcement authority to ensure compliance. Local education agencies and schools are the executing hands, customizing and carrying out safety plans to meet state standards. Together, these efforts form a comprehensive approach to school safety in Utah, one that is continually refined through assessments, collaboration, and feedback. The expectation is that with regular practice, vigilant assessment, and proper personnel in place, Utah's schools will be significantly safer and better prepared to prevent and respond to emergencies – ultimately protecting the lives of students and staff in every community.

References:

- Utah State Legislature, H.B. 140 (2023) – *Standard Response Protocol to Active Threats in Schools*, long title and provisions (Source: le.utah.gov)(Source: upr.org).

- Utah State Legislature, H.B. 84 (2024) – *School Safety Amendments*, summary of 4th Substitute (Feb 26, 2024) outlining needs assessments and alternatives (Source: makeourschoolssafe.org)(Source: makeourschoolssafe.org).

- Utah Code §53G-8-701.5 (2024/2025) – *School safety needs assessment and personnel requirements* (as amended), requiring each school to conduct a safety needs assessment and report results, with a minimum frequency of every three years (Source: le.utah.gov)(Source: le.utah.gov).

- Utah State Board of Education – **School Safety Center** guidance on Needs Assessments (2024-25), referencing H.B. 84's requirement and recommending assessment tools (Source: schools.utah.gov)(Source: schools.utah.gov).

- Emery School District Policy CE: School Safety (2024) – example of LEA policy implementing state code, requiring Dec 2024 assessments for all schools and reporting to state authorities (Source: policies.emeryschools.org)(Source: policies.emeryschools.org).

- Utah Public Radio (UPR) – *School safety is the focus of several bills this session* (Feb 10, 2023), noting H.B. 140's drill requirements and context of other bills (Source: upr.org)(Source: upr.org).

- KUER News – *More money for Utah school safety will be a big ticket ask next year* (Nov 19, 2024), discussing the 2024 law's funding, the role of the School Safety Task Force, and the use of needs assessments to determine budget needs (Source: kuer.org)(Source: kuer.org).

- BillTrack50 Summary of H.B. 61 (2023) – *School Safety Requirements*, describing creation of the State Security Chief (DPS) to enforce safety laws, School Security Task Force, required threat assessments, safety specialists, and grant program (Source: billtrack50.com).

- Utah State Legislature Interim Brief – *Bill Summary: School Safety Amendments* (Nov 2023), detailing the expanded duties of the State Security Chief, the role of County Security Chiefs, and training standards (Source: le.utah.gov)(Source: le.utah.gov).

- Utah Code §§ 53G-8-803 and 53G-8-805 – codified provisions for **standard response protocols** (active threat drills) and **panic alert devices**, respectively (Source: le.utah.gov) (Source: centegix.com), which were part of the recent legislative changes reinforcing school emergency preparedness.

Tags: utah legislation, school safety, education policy, house bill 140, school security, emergency preparedness, violence prevention, state law

About ClearlyIP

ClearlyIP Inc. — Company Profile (June 2025)

1. Who they are

ClearlyIP is a privately-held unified-communications (UC) vendor headquartered in Appleton, Wisconsin, with additional offices in Canada and a globally distributed workforce. Founded in 2019 by veteran FreePBX/Asterisk contributors, the firm follows a "build-and-buy" growth strategy, combining in-house R&D with targeted acquisitions (e.g., the 2023 purchase of Voneto's EPlatform UCaaS). Its mission is to "design and develop the world's most respected VoIP brand" by delivering secure, modern, cloud-first communications that reduce cost and boost collaboration, while its vision focuses on unlocking the full potential of open-source VoIP for organisations of every size. The leadership team collectively brings more than 300 years of telecom experience.

2. Product portfolio

- **Cloud Solutions** – Including *Clearly Cloud* (flagship UCaaS), **SIP Trunking**, **SendFax.to** cloud fax, **ClusterPBX OEM**, **Business Connect** managed cloud PBX, and **EPlatform** multitenant UCaaS. These provide fully hosted voice, video, chat and collaboration with 100+ features, per-seat licensing, geo-redundant PoPs, built-in call-recording and mobile/desktop apps.

- **On-Site Phone Systems** – Including CIP PBX appliances (FreePBX pre-installed), ClusterPBX Enterprise, and Business Connect (on-prem variant). These offer local survivability for compliance-sensitive sites; appliances start at 25 extensions and scale into HA clusters.

- **IP Phones & Softphones** – Including CIP SIP Desk-phone Series (CIP-25x/27x/28x), fully white-label branding kit, and *Clearly Anywhere* softphone (iOS, Android, desktop). Features zero-touch provisioning via Cloud Device Manager or FreePBX "Clearly Devices" module; Opus, HD-voice, BLF-rich colour LCDs.

- **VoIP Gateways** – Including Analog FXS/FXO models, VoIP Fail-Over Gateway, POTS Replacement (for copper sun-set), and 2-port T1/E1 digital gateway. These bridge legacy endpoints or PSTN circuits to SIP; fail-over models keep 911 active during WAN outages.

- **Emergency Alert Systems** – Including **CodeX** room-status dashboard, **Panic Button**, and **Silent Intercom**. This K-12-focused mass-notification suite integrates with CIP PBX or third-party FreePBX for Alyssa's-Law compliance.

- **Hospitality** – Including **ComXchange** PBX plus PMS integrations, hardware & software assurance plans. Replaces aging Mitel/NEC hotel PBXs; supports guest-room phones, 911 localisation, check-in/out APIs.

- **Device & System Management** – Including **Cloud Device Manager** and **Update Control (Mirror)**. Provides multi-vendor auto-provisioning, firmware management, and secure FreePBX mirror updates.

- **XCast Suite** – Including Hosted PBX, SIP trunking, carrier/call-centre solutions, SOHO plans, and XCL mobile app. Delivers value-oriented, high-volume VoIP from ClearlyIP's carrier network.

3. Services

- **Telecom Consulting & Custom Development** – FreePBX/Asterisk architecture reviews, mergers & acquisitions diligence, bespoke application builds and Tier-3 support.
- **Regulatory Compliance** – E911 planning plus **Kari's Law**, **Ray Baum's Act** and **Alyssa's Law** solutions; automated dispatchable location tagging.
- **STIR/SHAKEN Certificate Management** – Signing services for Originating Service Providers, helping customers combat robocalling and maintain full attestation.
- **Attestation Lookup Tool** – Free web utility to identify a telephone number's service-provider code and SHAKEN attestation rating.

- **FreePBX® Training** – Three-day administrator boot camps (remote or on-site) covering installation, security hardening and troubleshooting.
- **Partner & OEM Programs** – Wholesale SIP trunk bundles, white-label device programs, and ClusterPBX OEM licensing.

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4. Executive management (June 2025)

- **CEO & Co-Founder: Tony Lewis** – Former CEO of Schmooze Com (FreePBX sponsor); drives vision, acquisitions and channel network.

- **CFO & Co-Founder: Luke Duquaine** – Ex-Sangoma software engineer; oversees finance, international operations and supply-chain.

- **CTO & Co-Founder: Bryan Walters** – Long-time Asterisk contributor; leads product security and cloud architecture.

- **Chief Revenue Officer: Preston McNair** – 25+ years in channel development at Sangoma & Hargray; owns sales, marketing and partner success.

- **Chief Hospitality Strategist: Doug Schwartz** – Former 360 Networks CEO; guides hotel vertical strategy and PMS integrations.

- **Chief Business Development Officer: Bob Webb** – 30+ years telco experience (Nsight/Cellcom); cultivates ILEC/CLEC alliances for Clearly Cloud.

- **Chief Product Officer: Corey McFadden** – Founder of Voneto; architect of EPlatform UCaaS, now shapes ClearlyIP product roadmap.

- **VP Support Services: Lorne Gaetz** (appointed Jul 2024) – Former Sangoma FreePBX lead; builds 24×7 global support organisation.

- **VP Channel Sales: Tracy Liu** (appointed Jun 2024) – Channel-program veteran; expands MSP/VAR ecosystem worldwide.

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5. Differentiators

- **Open-Source DNA:** Deep roots in the FreePBX/Asterisk community allow rapid feature releases and robust interoperability.
- **White-Label Flexibility:** Brandable phones and ClusterPBX OEM let carriers and MSPs present a fully bespoke UCaaS stack.
- **End-to-End Stack:** From hardware endpoints to cloud, gateways and compliance services, ClearlyIP owns every layer, simplifying procurement and support.
- **Education & Safety Focus:** Panic Button, CodeX and e911 tool-sets position the firm strongly in K-12 and public-sector markets.

In summary

ClearlyIP delivers a comprehensive, modular UC ecosystem—cloud, on-prem and hybrid—backed by a management team with decades of open-source telephony pedigree. Its blend of carrier-grade infrastructure, white-label flexibility and vertical-specific solutions (hospitality, education, emergency-compliance) makes it a compelling option for ITSPs, MSPs and multi-site enterprises seeking modern, secure and cost-effective communications.

DISCLAIMER