



Critical Training Needs for Armed Security Officers (ASO) in CT Schools: Preliminary Report March 2025

This preliminary report provides a snapshot of the data collected on ASO training needs. Given the relevance of the topic in the current legislative session, the research team released these early findings to help inform school communities and state leadership. A forthcoming comprehensive report will provide a deeper analysis of the data.

This research was conducted in collaboration with the Connecticut Center for School Safety and Crisis Preparation and the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection. The primary objective was to identify the most critical training needs for armed security officers (ASOs) in Connecticut's K-12 schools. A total of 286 participants completed all survey questions. After providing basic demographic information and initial thoughts, participants had the option to give additional feedback or rate the responses of others. Ratings were based on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). From the initial analysis, 24 training categories emerged.

Survey participants also identified their Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) region and community classification (see Figures 1 and 2). The regional distribution included 33% from Region 3, 22% from Region 5, 19% from Region 2, 17% from Region 4, and 15% from Region 1. Regarding community classification, 30% identified as urban, 27% as rural, and 58% as suburban. The percentages exceed 100% because respondents serving multiple regions or classifications could select more than one option, ensuring accurate representation of regional and statewide providers.

Figure 1 DEMHS Region

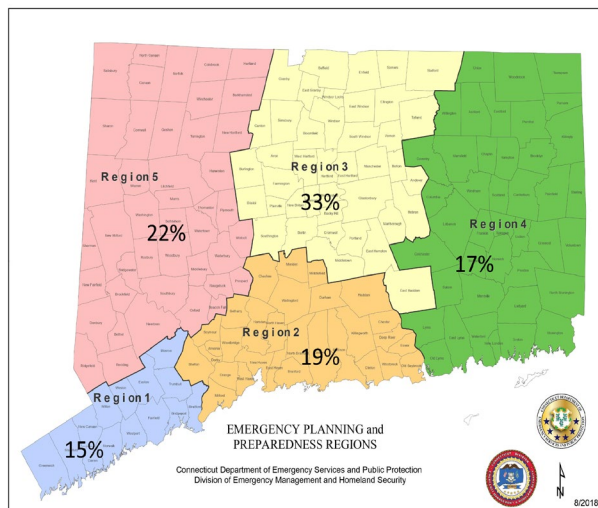
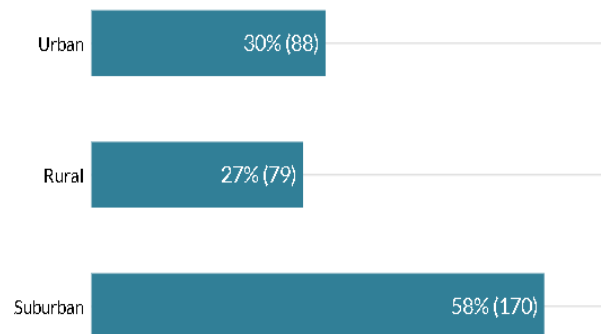


Figure 2 Community Classification



Please contact the CT Center for School Safety and Crisis Preparation for more information.

<https://www.wcsu.edu/schoolsafetycenter/>

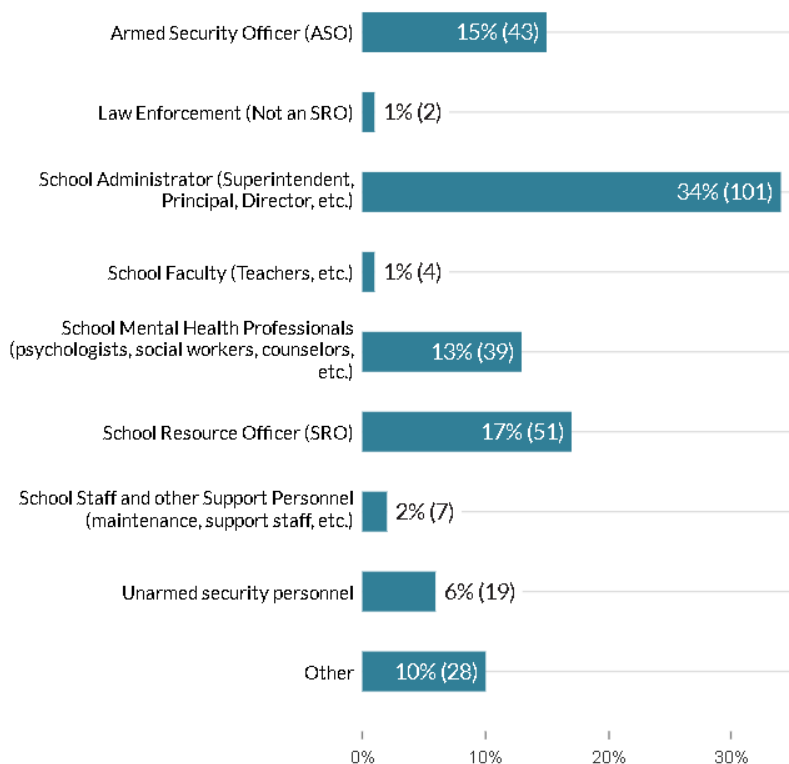
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Figure 3 illustrates the professional roles of survey participants. The four largest groups were school administrators (34%), school resource officers (SROs) (17%), armed security officers (ASOs) (15%), and school mental health professionals (13%).

Figure 3 Participant Role



The initial analysis identified 24 training categories. Table 1 provides an overview of the top 10 categories, organized into three sections. Each category includes its frequency and the average rating score provided by survey participants.

- **Top 10 by Frequency:** Categories are ranked in descending order based on how often they were mentioned.
- **Top 10 by Score:** Categories are ranked by their average rating score.
- **Top 10 Overlap – Frequency & Score:** This section combines frequency and score to highlight the most well-rounded priorities. The top 16 categories (by frequency) were first identified, then ranked by score, with the top 10 listed in this section.

The initial findings provide valuable insight into what the school community values in ASO training requirements. Based on frequency, the top 10 training categories are led by active shooter training, de-escalation training, and legal updates. However, when considering participant ratings, *Trusted Adult/Mentoring* emerges as an especially valuable topic to survey participants.



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A combined analysis of frequency and rating scores reveals a well-rounded set of training priorities that could enhance the ASO's impact in schools. The top five overlapping categories include *Trusted Adult/Mentoring*, *Threat Recognition*, *De-escalation*, *Active Shooter Training*, and *Emergency Procedures*. Notably, while *Active Shooter Training* and *De-escalation*—both reactionary skills—were the most frequently mentioned, participants assigned the highest value (by score) to *Trusted Adult/Mentoring* and *Threat Recognition*. This suggests a strong preference for proactive and relationship-based approaches across different regional and community classifications.

Table 1 Top 10 Categories

Top 10 by Frequency			Top 10 by Score			Top 10 Overlap- Frequency & Score		
Category	Frequency	Score	Category	Frequency	Score	Category	Frequency	Score
Active Shooter Training	46	4.01	Trusted Adult/Mentoring	8	4.1	Trusted Adult/Mentoring	8	4.1
De-escalation Training	46	4.03	Miscellaneous	6	4.1	Threat Recognition	7	4.09
Legal Updates	27	3.69	Threat Recognition	7	4.09	De-escalation Training	46	4.03
Crisis Intervention	26	3.92	Defensive Tactics	5	4.06	Active Shooter Training	46	4.01
School Environment	23	3.97	De-escalation Training	46	4.03	Emergency Procedures	15	4.01
Relationship Building	21	3.98	Active Shooter Training	46	4.01	Threat Assessment	7	4.01
Firearms Training	18	3.91	Emergency Procedures	15	4.01	Special Education	9	4
Use of Force Training	17	3.75	Threat Assessment	7	4.01	Relationship Building	21	3.98
Emergency Procedures	15	4.01	Special Education	9	4	School Environment	23	3.97
Special Education	9	4	Restorative Practices	6	4	Communication Skills	7	3.94

While this report highlights the most pressing training areas, it serves as an initial exploration rather than a comprehensive analysis. A follow-up report will provide a more detailed examination, including deeper analysis of specific examples, a closer look at miscellaneous topics, and an exploration of emerging themes from the research. Continued investigation will help refine training priorities and enhance the effectiveness of ASO programs in school communities.