

# Former Uvalde school district police chief charged with child endangerment after shooting that killed 21

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The former school district police chief in Uvalde, Texas, who oversaw the response to [the 2022 elementary school shooting that killed 21 people, including 19 children](#), was arrested on a child endangerment charge, an official at the Uvalde jail said Thursday.

Pete Arredondo, 52, was taken in by law enforcement officers Thursday, charged with 10 counts of abandoning/endangering a child, according to an indictment filed in the 38th Judicial Court.

The charge was first reported by the [San Antonio Express-News](#).

The Uvalde jail official confirmed Arredondo was being booked into the facility Thursday afternoon. His bail was set a \$10,000 surety bond and nine \$10,000 personal recognizance bonds. He posted bail and was later released the same day.

Arredondo did not immediately respond to requests for comment. It was unclear whether an attorney is representing him.

A second officer was also charged. Adrian Gonzales was booked and released from jail Friday, according to the Uvalde County Sheriff's Office.

Gonzales, 51, is charged with 29 felony counts of abandoning or endangering a child, according to an indictment.

The indictment said Gonzales placed 29 children "in imminent danger" of injury or death on May 24, 2022.

Gonzales, who heard gunshots at Robb Elementary School, and was advised of the general location of the shooter, failed to engage, distract, delay or impede the shooter until after the gunman entered rooms 111 and 112 at the school and shot at children, the indictment said.

Gonzales also failed to follow his active-shooting training by not moving toward the gunfire, according to the indictment.

Gonzales' attorney, Nico LaHood, based in San Antonio, said in a statement Friday he had just taken the case and would be working to obtain evidence the government was relying on in the accusations.

"Mr. Gonzales' position is he did not violate school district policy or state law," the statement said. "The application of this statute, to law enforcement, under these circumstances is unprecedented in the state of Texas. It will take time to evaluate these allegations and the underlying facts."

Arredondo's indictment stated that in his role as the police chief of the school district and as incident commander during the shooting, he "intentionally, knowingly, recklessly and with criminal negligence" placed 10 children in "imminent danger of bodily injury, death, physical impairment and mental impairment."

The indictment purported he heard shots fired in a classroom and "failed to identify the incident as an active shooter incident, failed to respond as trained to an active shooter incident, and instead called for SWAT thereby delaying the response by law enforcement officers."

After he was advised that a child or children were injured, he instead directed law enforcement officers to evacuate the wing before confronting the shooter, failed to determine if the door to classroom 111 was locked, and failed to "timely provide keys and breaching tools to enter classrooms 111 and 112." The adjoining classrooms 111 and 112 were the victims in the massacre were killed.

The indictment said he failed to follow the school district's active shooter response policy, which included establishing a command center, and failed to develop an "immediate action plan" — which left law enforcement officers and Border Patrol agents without "clear information or direction" regarding the shooting, and "delay[ed] the response" by those officers to the active shooter.

Early this year, the Justice Department released a 600-page report that said poor coordination, training and execution of “active shooter” protocols led to a “failure” in the response of the Uvalde officers who rushed to the shooting at Robb Elementary.

Instead of continuing to engage the 18-year-old gunman — who was locked in a classroom with 33 students and three teachers — officers retreated after an initial burst of gunfire and did not “push forward immediately and continuously to eliminate the threat,” the Justice Department said.

The officers had been taught erroneously that a situation involving an active shooter — an armed person whom federal authorities define as “actively” killing or trying to kill others — “can easily morph into a hostage crisis,” the report says.

More than 70 minutes passed between the time officers arrived at the school and when the gunman was confronted and killed. In addition to the 19 students, two teachers were fatally shot, and 17 other people were injured.

State lawmakers previously came to a conclusion similar to the Justice Department’s, with a 2022 report that said “systemic failures and egregiously poor decision making” plagued the law enforcement and school district response.

Arredondo, described in the Justice Department’s report as the scene’s de facto commander, was among the officers to have faced administrative punishment over the response.

Uvalde's school board fired him last year. At the time, his lawyer described him as a victim of the shooting and said his firing was an “illegal and unconstitutional public lynching.”

In a statement, the school district said it had no information.

"As we have done and continue to do, we extend our sincerest sympathies to all who lost loved ones," it said. "Our hearts go out to everyone affected by this challenging situation."

Berlinda Arreola, whose 10-year-old granddaughter, Amerie Jo Garza, was among those killed, said Thursday that Arredondo's arrest is not a "happy moment."

"It's still a sad moment. There's nothing to be happy about," she said. "We are having to relive this nightmare again knowing they had the chance to save some of our loved ones — maybe all of them."